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Monday, March 31 at 11 am at New Bond Street

Valuable Printed Books

including continental books of the 15th to the 19th century, including the first book printed in Deventer; Gesner, *Mort d'Abel*, coloured printed plates before letters, 1793 and Doral, *Les Bataves*, a large paper copy of the first edition bound by Bozerian, 1770; English books of the 16th to the 19th century, including Salesbury, *Dictionary in Englishe and Welshe*, 1547; John Lyly, *Sixe Court Comedies*, 1632; P. Massinger, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, 1633 and a long run of *The London Chronicle*, 79 vol., 1757-1804; books on natural history and science, including J. Napier, *Rabdologiae*, Edinburgh, 1617; J. Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises*, 1677-83; *The Astronomical Annual*, 1835-97; A. G. Butler, *Foreign Finches*, 1894, and Charles Darwin, *Fossil Lepadidae*, 2 vol., presentation copies, 1851-54; colour-plate books and atlases.

Catalogue 70p

Thursday, April 10 and following day, at 1 pm at Hodgson's Rooms

Private Press Books

including an almost complete collection of books from the Kelmscott Press; an extensive collection of books from the Doves Press, with examples on vellum and in Doves Bindings; books from the Golden Cockerel Press including *The Four Gospels* and *Canterbury Tales*, and specially bound copies of later publications; books from the Nonesuch Press, including Dickens' *Works* and Shakespeare's *Works*; the Gregynog Press *esap*; works issued by the Vale Press, Ashendene Press, Funfolico Press, Limited Editions Club, the Cambridge University Printer, Arcadia Press, and others.

Catalogue £1.40

Monday, April 14 and following day, at 11 am and 2.30 pm at New Bond Street

Valuable Atlases, Globes and Maps and Printed Books relating to Travel and Exploration

including an important pair of Blaeu's library globes; the autograph manuscript of the Life 16th century *Isolario di Portolano* of Antonio Millo; atlases of Ortelius, Mercator, Blaeu, Ogilby, Sanson, de Fer, Moll, Homann, Lotter, Jefferys and others; Sanuto's *Geografia*, 1538; important wall maps of Arnold, de Wit and Blaeu; panoramic river maps of Matthias Koops; an interesting collection of Italian 16th century maps; British county maps and maps of European countries, America, Asia and the West Indies; De Bry's *Minor Voyages*, 1598-1613, Fernandez de Quiros' *Relatione d'un memoriale . . .*, (1611), first edition in Italian, in a contemporary Milanese-decorated morocco binding, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, 1625-26, Dalrymple's *An historical collection . . .*; 1770-71 presentation copy inscribed by the compiler, and other voyages; Increase Mather's *A brief history of the war with the Indians in New England*, 1676, and *An essay for the recording of illustrations providences*, Boston, 1684, in contemporary New English calf, Downing's *A discourse . . .*, 1672, Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 1702, Champlain's *Les voyages*, 1613, Lalemant's *Relation . . .*, 1664, Vancouver's *A voyage to the North Pacific Ocean*, 1801, and other books on North America and Canada; books relating to the Argentine, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Guiana, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru; Laet's *Description des Indes Occidentales*, 1640, Colin's *Labor evangelica*, 1663, Hunter's *The transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island*, 1793, and other books on Australasia and the Pacific; books on China, Japan and the Indian sub-Continent, Alderete's *Varias antiguedis di España Africa y otras provincias*, 1614, Barrow's *Travels into the interior of Southern Africa*, 1801-04, Denham and Clapperton's *Travels and discoveries in Northern and Central Africa*, 1826, Gardiner's *Journey to the Zaoila Country*, 1836, Salt's *A voyage to Abyssinia*, 1814, and other books on the African continent.

Catalogue £2.50

Thursday, April 17 and following day, at 1 pm at Hodgson's Rooms

Art Reference Books

including Abbey's *Travel in Aquatint and Lithography*, 2 vol., 1956-57; British Museum's *Catalogue of Books printed in the XVth Century*, 9 vol. in 11, 1908-63; Leonardo da Vinci's *Les Manuscrits*, 6 vol., Paris, 1881-91; *Feuillets Inédits*, 23 vol., *Paris*, 1898-1901; Olivier and others, *Manuel de l'Amateur de Reliures Armoriées Française*, 30 vol., Paris, 1924-38; Graves and Roe's *Catalogue of the Pictures and Drawings in the Collection of Frederick John Nettlefold*, 4 vol., 1933-38; Aiken's *National Field Sports of Great Britain*, 1903; Duchesne *Collection of Etchings*, 2 vol., Edinburgh, 1803; Dortu's *Toulouse-Lautrec et son Oeuvre*, 6 vol., *New York*, 1971; Popham's *Catalogue of Drawings in the Collection formed by Sir Thomas Phillipps*, 1935; Turner and Wornum's *Turner Gallery*, 1875; Rhead's *History of the Fan*, 1910; Butler and Hussey's *Architecture and Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens*, 4 vol., 1950; Ceiesinsky's *English Furniture of the Eighteenth Century*, 3 vol., no date; Cresswell's *Early Muslim Architecture*, 2 vol., Oxford, 1932-40; Macquoid's *History of English Furniture*, 4 vol., 1904-38; Edwards' *Dictionary of English Furniture*, 3 vol., 1924-27; Bode's *Die Anfänge der Majolikakunst in Toskana*, Berlin, 1911; Lucy's *Female Costume* 1665; Lucas' *Catalogue of Sassoon Chinese Ivories*, 3 vol., 1950; Williamson's *Catalogue of the Collection of Jewels and Precious Works of Art*, 1910; and other works relating to Biography, Painting, Prints and Drawings, Architecture and Furniture, Ceramics and Glass, Costume, Textiles etc, Metalwork, Ivories etc.

Catalogue 75p

REMINDER

COPY FOR ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE T.L.S. SHOULD ARRIVE NOT LATER THAN 10.30 a.m. MONDAY PRECEDING THE DATE OF PUBLICATION

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T·L·S

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

FRIDAY • 4 APRIL 1980 • No 4019 • 30p

An engraving by Edward Carrick for a presentation copy of Virgil's Georgics, inscribed by George W. Jones, printer, "At the Sign of the Dolphin". The book is to be sold by Sotheby's in an auction of private press books next Friday in Hodgson's Rooms, 115 Chancery Lane, London WC2. An almost complete collection of books from the Kelmscott Press, among them the editions of Shelley's and Keats's poems, is included in the two-day sale.

The social history of soccer

The vicissitudes of William Godwin

Henry James in Bolton St; Byron in Italy

The Movement and its audience, by Blake Morrison

Fiction: Shirley Hazzard, Melvyn Bragg, J. P. Donleavy

Jonathan Pryce's Hamlet

Dora Russell; Natalia Makarova; Marguerite Yourcenar

Drake in California

Robert Wistrich on the Rudi Dutschke generation

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT
28 MARCH 1980

contents

Fifty years on . . .

General von Seeckt's The Future of the German Empire, *translated by Oakley Williams, was reviewed in the TLS of April 3, 1930 :*

. . . In England the evolution of the Social Spirit took place with the development of national feeling, whereas Germany had to wait for generations for the political unity for which German thought had long been ripe. But this late-achieved unity has had to withstand the shocks of defeat and revolution. It is therefore not surprising that many Germans of the rising generation feel that what remains is nothing but a name, and that they are entitled to a free hand in the reconstruction of the German State. To this contention General von Seeckt replies that the future is rooted in the past; and his book is an acutely reasoned attempt to lay down the characteristics of the German State in the light of historical tradition. . . .

. . . It is a surprisingly individualistic State. Experience has taught General von Seeckt the dangers of paternalism. A people must not have standards of welfare imposed upon it, but must attain them by its own exertions. The State can do no more than create conditions favourable to their attainment; and it is not the least of the evils inherent in the Treaty of Versailles that it forces the German State to impose upon its subjects a burden of taxation which impedes, and perhaps forbids, their proper progress. But in this matter General von Seeckt is on the whole an optimist. In the long run the German people cannot be prevented from making their contribution to the civilization of Europe. Their immediate task is to put themselves into a condition to make it. The first need is for economic independence. An agriculture made prosperous by the standardized quality and graded sale of its products will protect them against the danger of another blockade. Their industry is already strong, but is too dependent on foreign capital; and General von Seeckt views with alarm the prospect of disputes between German workmen and alien employers. In the ethical sphere, too, Germany must be independent, and the State will accordingly safeguard factors which make for strength—religion at one end of the scale and sport at the other. In the sphere of education its influence may legitimately go beyond mere recognition and patronage, for it is consultative . . .

. . . entitled to train its citizens in accordance with its fundamental conceptions. It must, however, be aware of maintaining its discipline too long and too logically. Much of the unpopularity of the police in Germany is due on the one hand to their enforcement of rules and regulations which authority had no business to impose, and, on the other, to the over-centralization of control :—

> It is difficult to appreciate in what way it promotes Europe's unity for an East Prussian to be regulating the traffic of Munich by instructions from Berlin, or for every, no doubt necessary, lot in any case irritating, "*Es ist verboten*" notice to be displayed under the Empire's eagle.

Such extravagances are the consequence of the rapid growth of bureaucracy in modern Germany, but matters would not be improved if powers were transferred from officials to the Deputies. Parliament should recognize that it does not represent the will of the people on this or that specific issue, but is the mouthpiece of opinion. Its function is thus mainly critical . . .

Saturday afternoon fever

By Paul Smith

TONY MASON :
Association Football and English Society 1863-1915
278pp. Brighton: Harvester. £15.95.
0 85527 797 1

The fierce partisans of each side rubbed their shoulders together, and as I looked round the parallelogram the words of Hecate, in *Macbeth*, were brought vividly to mind :

> Black spirits and white,
> Red spirits and grey,
> Mingle, mingle, mingle,
> You that mingle may.

Not a board-school prize essay, but "Ubique", coming up for his account of Notts County v Notts Forest, in the *Athletic News* in December 1890. In adding so much purple to their already garish "Pink 'Uns" and "Primroses", the "Ubiques" and "Throw-ins" and "On the Balls" who propelled the spheroid past the hapless custodian in a thousand match-reports were no doubt asserting the superiority of their literary talents to the diminimal necessity of hacking for a living, but they were perhaps also reflecting their readers' feeling, or anxiety to believe, that the Saturday ritual in which they were engaged was a dramatic spectacle not to be dismissed as "just a game".

For association football, as it had developed by the 1890s, was no longer simply a recreation. With the spread of professionalism, the growth of attendance, and the expansion of press coverage, it was already the minor industry and major public attraction that it remains to this day. The nature of the industry and the secret of the attraction are the themes of Tony Mason's fascinating book. He is pursuing a fashionable path. Until quite recently, nineteenth-century man was reasonably safe from serious social historians when he went out to play. Now, the hunt for *homo ludens* is on, in the hope that his leisure may reveal more of him than his labour. If he is a working man especially, his hours of ease are examined as minutely as his hours of toil ; by some in case they should prove different—the precious occasion for the enjoyment of an autonomous culture ; by others in case they should proved the same—dominated by relations of conflict and wound in the tentacles of "social control".

Was association football in its formative years a "working-class game", Dr Mason is concerned to ask, in arena for the enactment of a communal working-class experience, or was it really a department of the new entertainment industry, "professionalised and staged by a new breed of tertiary sector entrepreneurs who saw mass leisure and especially professional sport as a medium for getting rich quickly" ? Were they free for that Saturday afternoon hour or two, the worried faces on the sixpenny bank, or were they innocently relishing a more subtle form of serfdom ?

Even if the terms in which these questions are posed make sense, it is hard to offer answers. We do not know much about the great majority of those involved in football before the First World War, the players; the managers, directors, and shareholders, and above all the spectators for whom the professional game existed. Mason labours splendidly to provide a factual and to the limited degree possible a quantitative basis for understanding. The signal merit of his study is to assemble much more information about Victorian and Edwardian football than we have ever had before. Inevitably he has to lean heavily on the press, especially Edward Hulton's *Athletic News*, but he shows great partinacity in plumbing other sources, even though he has been frustrated just where a wealth of material might seem to be assured : it is a comment on the way football has been and is run, that of the thirty-three modern league clubs founded before 1914 whose records he asked to see, eighteen claimed to have none, seven refused access, one would not reply, and only Aston Villa and Derby County had substantial collections available for consultation.

Mason is engagingly worried about the danger of professional deroga-

tion entailed by the shortage of measurable data, and his understandable desire to strike a tone which will satisfy the Social Science Research Council without sounding too ridiculous on the terrace is another source of unease : parts of the book are written in a kind of "academotic", hazardously balanced between the scholarly and the colloquial. Yet this is a scholarly work, the first serious treatment of its subject as social history.

Emerging as a regulated sport out of the public schools and universities, the association game developed its modern forms remarkably quickly in the 1870s and 1880s, as old boys' groups, churches, chapels, pubs, and factories spawned teams, and in the North the spirit of emulation rapidly bred professionalism, with the importation of the « Scotch professors" and the growth of more or less covert payment before the existence of the professional was recognized by the Football Association in 1885. It was the professionals who brought in the close-passing "combination" game, which drove out the old dribbling rush beloved of the individualistic amateur ("I am playing purely for my own pleasure, Sir !" had been the Hon Alfred Lyttelton's crushing retort to the suggestion in an early England v Scotland match that he might occasionally pass the ball).

Football was soon a matter of vital interest to thousands who did not necessarily play it. When Blackburn Olympic met the Old Etonians in the FA Cup Final of 1883, telegrams giving the latest score were posted every few minutes at the Cotton Tree Inn in the town, and by 1889 enthusiasm was enough to sustain four Saturday football editions of the *Blackburn Evening Express*. The establishment of the Saturday half-holiday from the 1850s, enabling unskilled workers generally in the 80s and 90s, the growth of leisure as a distinct aspect of life for which new outlets were required in the towns where the traditional ways of disposing of non-work time barely survived, and the development of the cheap train and tramcar to carry people to watch others doing what they lacked opportunity or inclination to do themselves, made the modern spectator sport. By the mid-1890s, nearly two million people a season were watching league football matches. Soccer was a mass enterprise.

What sort of mass enterprise it was is not easy to determine. It is tempting to see it simply as a branch of the expanding leisure industry—a context in which Mason might have done more to place it. His graph of attendance at FA Cup Finals needs to be set beside graphs of real wages and *per capita* beer and spirit consumption. The late 1880s and the 1890s were a period when there was money to spend, and the years of the professional game's "take-off" were the years, too, of booming pub trade and the spread of the Mass Empires. Football had indeed many connections with the licensed trade and the music-hall. The Bishop of Manchester, opening the Bolton Lads Club in 1890, saw healthy exercise as an alternative to hanging about street-corners and "astonishing pubs, music-halls, and cheap theatres."

This was a little naive so far as football was concerned : for a good many, especially those who only stood and watched, it might be less an antidote than an *aperitif* to other kinds of diversion. This is clearly suggested by match programmes, a source of which Mason makes hardly any use, but one which more than any other except possibly photographs brings back the flavour of a myriad Saturday afternoons. Advertisements for drink, popular theatres, and cinemas are frequent. At Villa's match against West Bromwich Albion on September 4, 1911, you might have spent the interval scanning the details of half-a-dozen picture-houses and theatres, balancing the merits for your evening out of "Mdlle Leonie de Lausanne, Lady Champion Rifle Shot of the World, Inventor of Disrobing a Lady" who was singing at the Hippodrome, and "Mdlle Irma Lowraine, a beautiful *posseuse* in living pictures depicting the Five Senses", fielded by the Empire.

The pitch and the stage came even closer sometimes : George Robey arranged and played in charity matches, and one or two footballers, trod the boards when their playing days were over : at the Chelsea Palace in December, 1909, a clutch of them was appearing with Fred Karno's troupe in "The Football Match", though the key role of "Stiffy, the Goalkeeper" was taken by the twenty-year-old Charles Chaplin. The Villa stars, John Devey and Harry Hampton, opened a cinema when they had given up the game ; many other ex-professionals took public-houses. Like other sports, football had links also with gambling. The football coupon can be traced back as far as 1889, and a statistician estimated that in Liverpool and St Helens in 1907 probably a quarter of a million coupons were on offer every week, with an income to the promoters of at least £8,000 to £10,000.

But if football was a part of the entertainment industry, its re-

Cup-tie action between Blackburn Rovers and Notts County, March 1891 : from Christopher Hibbert's Illustrated London News Social History of Victorian Britain (1975).

wards did not compare very favourably with those of other parts. True, professional players with league clubs might hope, Mason shows, to earn rather more than the common run of the skilled working class from which they were largely recruited, and local popularity might bring further rewards, while for the most successful there were pickings from journalism or advertising : Manchester City professed to have used Oxo regularly in the 1903-04 season, when they won the FA Cup. But the professional was a club servant, bound by the retain-and-transfer system which denied him the right to offer his skill and make his bargain where he pleased, and his union, whose fortunes Mason sketches, had little success in loosening this bondage. The humiliating distinction between him and the amateur remained : England's captain, N. L. Jackson, it was alleged, travelled in a separate railway compartment from his professionals and dined apart from them at their hotel. All the same, football probably was, as Mason says, thinking of Billy Meredith, "better than coalmining".

For the men who put cash into it, however, it was not necessarily better than coal-mining. Successful professional clubs required money and time for their conduct : soccer might be adopted by the working classes, but it could hardly be owned and controlled by them. Mason's analysis of shareholders and directors shows that they were mainly middle-class. Boardrooms reveal a strong representation of wholesale and retail employers, manufacturers, and professional men, with the licensed trade well in evidence. Football was a business ; but the point is that it was often a very bad business. Mason is thin on the economics of clubs (we need more examination of balance-sheets), but it seems clear that while a few might be profitable many were not. Men who put their money into pubs and music-halls had reasonable prospects of gain. Some football-club directors and shareholders might do well, like H. A. Mears of Chelsea, who leased the club its ground and held the catering concession, but with the FA banning fees and limiting dividends to 5 per cent most could expect little return.

The vigorous development of association football cannot have rested primarily on its economic attractions. How far can it be fitted into the pattern, now so much under scrutiny, of middle-class attempts to promote "rational recreation", to engage the masses in activities which would inculcate sound moral values under rule, divert energy from harmful pursuits, and breed the physical and mental toughness needed to strengthen the national stock for the maintenance of empire and the repulse of foreign threats ? Almond of Loretto wrote an article in 1893 on "Football as a Moral Agent", and there were certainly those who saw it as a means of character-training, a safety-valve for dangerous passions, and an agent of reconciliation between classes.

But it was never really a plausible vehicle either for reforming working-class attitudes or for "National Efficiency". Many of the anti-class scrutineers of national *mores* came in the end to suspect that football was distracting working men and others not from militancy but from work.

No doubt that was the point. We are arriving at the conclusion from which the plain reader will have started : the crowds went and the shareholders and directors forked out because they enjoyed the game and found release in it. It is on the nature and influence of their enjoyment that Mason is not entirely satisfying. His book, admirable in its amassing of facts, has little theoretical backbone, and in the end the relations between football and society are left rather ill-defined. The hypotheses about the meaning of the game for its audience which are taken up in his penultimate chapter need much more extended investigation than they receive. Mason fairly stresses the difficulty of knowing what people wanted or took from their football, which makes it all the more surprising that he should have omitted to ask them : it is still easy to find men who watched football before the Great War, but there is no oral history here.

The most important of Mason's conclusions, that the role of professional football was partly to help create a sense of community and identification with place, requires to be set firmly against the general background of late nineteenth-century urban development and the growth of civic consciousness. Organized sport was one answer to industrial *anomie*, one channel of expression for the pride engendered in the manufacturing towns of the North and Midlands, especially by the sense that their work made the nation's wealth. Whether the bonds of community and identity which it forged cut across those linking working men as a "class" is a question on which Mason is rightly cautious : we have to remember that work experience remained more fundamental than leisure time in the determination of consciousness, and that the solidarities of sport, not least among the overwhelmingly working-class population of the terraces at a football match, might as easily reflect as rival those of the workplace.

Within the community of its followers, football certainly answered to significant needs : satisfaction of the gregarious instinct and the desire to make a cheerful row, the chance to become a critic for an afternoon on the performance of men whose wages one might feel one was paying, the opportunity to acquire a topic of conversation for the coming week, all these were noted among its attractions by *The Times* in 1910 and more memorably later in J. B. Priestley's evocation of what football meant to "Brudderton". Priestley, of course, saw more : you "pushed your way through a turnstile into another and altogether more splendid kind of life, hurtling with Conflict and yet passionate and beautiful in its Art". Rather unexpectedly, the *Fabian News* in 1913 also detected the art and believed that "the spectators are conscious of and delight in the beauty that they see". Perhaps that was true. Going to the match was an experience interweaving many strands, among which the dramatic and the aesthetic should not be forgotten merely because they were not often thought of as such.

What is needed to complete this book is a breath of the atmosphere of those late afternoons, with their compounds of compressed humanity, cigarette smoke on chill air, contagious excitement, tribal emotion, sense of shared ritual, and the hope, weekly renewed in spite of all experience, that out of the ordinariness of life something startling and beautiful might be born. Unlike cricket, football has failed to find poets, but it has not lacked its poetry and its power to move the feelings. Francis Thompson might have remembered it too :

> For the pitch is full of shades as I near the shadowy coast,
> And a ghostly winger centres to the heading of a ghost.
> And I look through my tears on a soundless-cheering host,
> As the goal-stealers flicker to and fro,
> To and fro :
> O my Bossett and my Bloomer long ago !

The cathedral-builder of Bolton St.

By A. N. Wilson

HENRY JAMES:
Letters
Volume 2, 1875-1883
Edited by Leon Edel
438pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 18045 3

In these letters the Master still signs himself Henry James Jr. If scarcely juvenilia—he is thirty-two when the volume opens—they reflect his apprenticeship as an author. In 1875, James had just published his first novel, *Roderick Hudson*, and was to some degree still finding his feet. More importantly, he was thinking of somewhere to put those feet when found; somewhere, that is, congenial to his art, a background against which the novelist's necessary obsession with, yet detachment from, the human race could best be fostered. Few cultivated Americans have omitted to give Paris a try, and this James did in 1875-76, the years in which this volume opens.

He was a rising star, and knew it. While he was achieving great success with the serialization of *The American*, Zola's current serial novel was suspended "on account of protests from provincial subscribers against its indecency". There is a splendid and revealing moment of self-congratulation when, taking his leave of Flaubert, Henry James met Zola coming up the staircase, "looking pale and sombre, and I saluted him with the flourish natural to a contributor who has just been invited to make his novel last longer yet". The young American triumphed, but he felt out of things, socially and aesthetically, with the French realist school. "I heard Emile Zola characterize his manner sometimes since as *merde à la vanille*. I send you by post Zola's own last—*merde au naturel*—simply hideous."

Moreover, much as he loved Paris, he suffered from "a long encroaching weariness with the French mind". "I was bored, the rest were in ecstasy" is a characteristic comment, as it happens about a performance of Wagner at the Opera. The French seemed to James "an awfully ugly and bilious little race"; and he tired of "French eating, the messes, sauces, greases, &c combined with the extreme predilection for the table, of the natives, male and female, who all look red and fat while they sit there". He made few French friends during his Parisian year, though, after his usual manner, he had dinner companions enough. The member for whom he felt the closest affection was his fellow-exile, Turgenev.

His relection of Paris seems a far cry from the young men in *The Tragic Muse*, for whom the French way of life seems so intimately connected with an artistic vocation. Gazing at Notre Dame,

> "How it straightens things out and blows away one's vapours—anything that's *done*!" said Nick; while his companion exclaimed, blandly and affectionately:
> "The dear old thing!"
> "The great point is to do something, instead of standing muddling and questioning: and by Jove it makes me want to!"
> "Want to build a cathedral?" Nash inquired.
> "Yes, just that."

Henry James Jr, of course, wanted to build a cathedral, but France was not the place to do it. It is the letters after the move to 3, Bolton Street, Mayfair, which fittingly reflect the eventual arrangement of his mind and art. Nick Dormer's feeling was James's own—*The great point is to do something*—and it was this, mysteriously, which London allowed. Not merely were his Bolton Street apartments warm, "a pleasure I never knew in Paris", they were a place where he could get down to things: "I didn't come here on a lark", he wrote to Henry Adams, "but in lieu of my usual quiet work-day life and I have limited myself to such entertainments as was consistent with this modest programme".

As is notorious, this was on one level not the case. The new volume covers the legendary winter of "the conquest of London", during which he dined out 107 times. His appetite for English social life being voracious, he met everyone there was to meet. As his addiction became more intense he became increasingly blasé, failing to get his "kick" out of a day unless it were crammed to bursting with new people. "There are several people here", he wrote home to his mother from the splendours of Monmore, "but no one very important, save John Bright and Lord Northbrook, the last Liberal viceroy of India. Millais the painter has been here for a part of the day and I took a walk with him this afternoon. . . ." Not bad going, one would have thought; but by then James's social appetite was literally insatiable: nor, as he himself believed, because he wanted more and more society (though he so obviously did) but because precisely at the moments when he was most obsessively involved, most anxious for the chimneypiece to be thick with invitations, he was able to be imaginatively detached.

Proust says that the artist who gives up an hour of work to converse for that period with a friend, "sait qu'il sacrifie une réalité pour quelque chose qui n'existe pas". James's obsession with England began with the fallacious view that "here . . . everyone is someone or something—represents something—has, in some degree or other, an historical identity". Of course, this was no truer in England than anywhere else, and James passed with great delicacy and blandness through the next, the almost paranoid, stage of disillusionment, the sense that the English are deliberately keeping something back, concealing a secret that will not be extended to the foreigner.

It is this awkwardness—so grandly exploited in his great novels when it had ceased to be a matter of intimate concern to himself—which lay behind his composition, at the close of 1878, of *An International Episode*, a rather sharp novella in which a pert young American woman, Beside Alden, rejects not merely Lord Lambeth's offer of marriage, but the whole system of values which she believes to be embodied by the British aristocracy. The story is not much read nowadays—it is one of his least successful creations, perhaps because of its conspicuous lack of detachment—and although the offence it caused some of his sillier hostesses was something he laughed off in his letters home, there is a shrilliness in his attitude to the tale and its reception which is a trifle disconcerting. "So long as one serves up Americans for their entertainment it is all right—but hands off the sacred natives!" It is the paranoia behind the story, however, which explains why in general terms the intense years of socializing did not destroy his art, but actually fed it: explains, indeed, how he found the energy for so many dinners and so much writing. Reviews, short novels, travel articles pour from his pen at this date. Perhaps paranoia is too strong a word for the infinitely slight humourlessness of the tale: but the frisson of disconcertment which it provoked lays bare, though he failed to understand it at the time, precisely why his muse required not the French cathedral which inspired Nick Dormer, but the Trollopian world of clubs and dinner parties: "quelque chose qui n'existe pas".

A conversation formative of *An International Episode* is related by E. S. Nadal, at that time secretary to the American Embassy in London, a compatriot with whom James used to walk the streets late at night. "Some lady of the middle class, whom he had lately visited in the country, had said to him, 'That is true of the aristocracy, but in one's own class it is different', meaning, said James, 'her class and mine'. Rather than this, he preferred to be regarded as a foreigner." He arrived, while being sure of the "superiority of English culture and the English mind to the French", with the classic American snobbery about the English middle class. He ends with the discovery that the so-called class system is the very reason that foreigners can always feel as much at home as the natives; for it guarantees that each area of society feels excluded by the others: a state of things, however undesirable from the point of view of egalitarian altruism, which is ideal for the artist who requires isolation in a crowd. At the time of *An International Episode* James complained of "the bother of being American". By the end of this volume, he can cheerfully describe going through social routines, "somnambulistically, I am afraid".

It was in this state of social somnambulism that his great art flourished, the disconcertment of the Innocent Abroad being externalized—and so pushed to the furthest borders of consciousness—in *A Portrait of a Lady*, completed in 1881. There is no evidence here of Henry James being, as Auden said a novelist should be, "among the filthy too". On the contrary, his art thrives on detachment, even though, to judge from these letters, there was a good deal of "dully putting up" with all the meals, if not "the wrongs of Man".

Yet, while somnambulating, he meets everyone, if for the purposes of his art, the person by his side at dinner "n'existe pas", there is much good gossip to relate to his family back in Massachusetts. "One of my latest sensations was going one day to Lady Airlie's to hear Browning read his own poems—with the comfort of finding that, at least, if you don't understand them, he himself apparently understands them even less. He read them as if he hated them and would like to bite them to pieces." Or, of the recently widowed John Cross, husband of George Eliot. "He poor fellow is left very much lamenting; but my private impression is that if she had not died, she would have killed him. He could not keep up the intellectual pace—all Dante and Goethe, Cervantes and the Greek tragedians. As he said himself, I was a cart-horse yoked to a racer."

James was always rather homesick in this period. The small proportion of the letters—carefully selected and unobtrusively edited—are to his mother or perpetual thoughts of them contributing to the sense of disjointedness and detachment which went to create his masterpieces. "I have retired from the glittering scene to meditate by my hedroom fire on the fleeting character of earthly possessions and to commune with my dearest mammy."

He did manage to return to America before his mother's death, though this came wholly unexpected, after an attack of asthma. By the end of that year, 1882, his father had died too. The loss of his mother afflicted him bitterly, and it was doubtless the experiences of intense suffering during the previous twelve months which enabled him to write his noble letter to Grace Norton in July 1883: "Sorrow comes in great waves—no one can know that better than you—but it rolls over us, and though it may almost smother us it leaves us on the spot and we know that life is strong, we are stronger, insuperable as it passes and we remain".

The demise of his parents suggested a new chapter to his life: it set off, effectively for ever, the sense of belonging to America. One bereavement had passed and been sublimated, the period begun in which his grand manner is fuller, his observation most acute. All the great novels from now on concern themselves with the parental relationship. "Ever faithfully yours, Henry James", he wrote to his publisher Frederick Macmillan at the end of a letter in April 1883: "Please, in any more announcements or advertising (of things of mine) direct the dropping of the *Jr.*"

The Cash and the Cause

By Doris Langley Moore

LESLIE A. MARCHAND (Editor):
Byron's Letters and Journals
Volume 10, 1822-1823.
239pp. John Murray. £8.95.
0 7195 3670 7.

Byron was one of those rare beings in whom are united all the conditions for bestowing on posterity a great archive of illuminating letters. The first and most essential condition is that the recipients and their descendants shall have some reason for keeping the correspondence. Byron supplied an abundance of reasons, the least of which, oddly enough, was literary merit. He wrote with so spontaneous an air that almost none of his contemporaries perceived the strong sinews under the light, rapid manner. Hobhouse, his fond and possessive friend, mistaking extracts from one of Byron's journals for letters to John Murray, condemned them as "sad trash".

We owe the ten splendid volumes Leslie Marchand has edited not so much to the writer's unique genius for communication as to such extraneous factors as his early achievement of fame. People take care of the letters of celebrities; but even before he became lionized in society, he had a charm which was not diminished by his having been ennobled at the age of ten and by the ownership of a ruined Abbey. Moreover, many of his correspondents were lawyers, bankers, publishers, dependents, creditors, debtors and foreign officials, by whom letters had to be retained in the way of business. And there was a sentimental half-sister who treasured his affectionate notes from the time when he was a schoolboy whom she had seldom met, a mistress who could not bring herself to destroy a line, and a wife who kept her hoard folded between wooden splints bound with red tape. (I had the pleasure of releasing them and laying them flat in box files).

So, aided by many unwitting collaborators, the sixth John Murray has been able to publish, up to and including this volume, some three thousand letters, edited in the most exemplary fashion. This penultimate collection—there is one more to come—is, to me, the most moving. Byron was producing what he knew was his best work, and yet he was at the nadir of his career.

His friends had taken fright at the improprieties of *Don Juan* and the supposed blasphemy of *Cain* and *The Vision of Judgment*, and were pleading with him to write less and striving to divorce him from his wittiest muse: his publisher, with whom his association had been long and suspicious, had hurt his feelings deeply by bringing out the first cantos of *Don Juan* under another imprimatur, and he had involved himself instead with the brothers John and Leigh Hunt who had no capital, and were unable to pay any advances or, eventually, any arrears either. Leigh Hunt had come out to Italy resolved to live on Byron's means, and he persisted in remaining there though earnestly offered repatriation, a touchy sponger considered by Byron's friends to be detracting balefully from his prestige.

Byron had expected, when his estranged wife inherited her mother's estate, to receive the share due to him under a marriage settlement which had tied up much of his fortune, but the trustees were in no hurry, and none could have been more dilatory than his own solicitor, John Hanson, who sent huge bills which nothing could make him itemize. There had dragged on since his boyhood a lawsuit worthy of Jarndyce v Jarndyce, concerning his property in Rochdale, and he had reached a stage of frustration when he would have settled it on almost any terms.

In consequence of these and similar matters, this sequence of letters dwells largely on money, and would support the impression he himself conveyed in verse and prose that his besetting passion was now avarice; but to his close friend and Power of Attorney, Douglas Kinnaird, he explained himself in his usual compact style and heading punctuation: "I suppose that you will laugh at all my pecuniary plans—but after having known the miseries of embarrassments—it is natural to try to provide against their recurrence".

He still, in fact, owed debts contracted through a so-between when under age on which exorbitant interest had been paid; the laws of the day were quite inadequate to control the devices of moneylenders, who always kept some part of the principal nominally outstanding. One may sympathize with Byron for instructing Kinnaird to pay such demands as theirs in small instalments. It was unreasonable, however, when he was putting by a good part of his income, to delay finalizing his account with Baxter, the coach-builder, who had supplied his luxurious Napoleonic carriage, and impordant, too, for there was interest accumulating on a bond he had given for the bill.

The anxiety about his finances, which must have sorely tried Kinnaird's patience, was certainly in some part due to the loss of the substantial revenue he had been able to count on from John Murray once he had renounced his quixotic habit of giving away his earnings to needy writers, even when himself in difficulties. The letters to and about Murray after they fell out are the most complex in the book, being the result of mischief stirred up by the Hunt brothers, who had everything to gain from detaching a very valuable author from his established publisher, and the outcome also of some inconsistency on Murray's side which made him too ready to listen to the counsel of moralizing advisers. It must be acknowledged that Murray had a grievance, because the "indecent" later works of his celebrated poet had been denied the protection of copyright, thus subjecting them to audacious piracies and increasing their circulation to his detriment.

Yet an affection subsisted between these two indignant men which shows Murray in a more humorous loophole for preserved friendship among his most scathing accusations, while Murray himself eventually acquired all available copyrights and left to his successors the tradition which has made the house Byron founded a "haunted holy ground" for literary pilgrims.

Though finance dominates much of this tenth batch, there are also a substantial number of very pleasant letters to new correspondents, the Blessingtons and Comte D'Orsay, Lady Hardy, whom he evidently admired and addressed in a tone verging on gallantry, Henry Edward Fox, destined to be the future lover of the Contessa Guiccioli, and to succeed his father (Byron's Whig political patron) as fourth Lord Holland, and J. J. Coulmann, the otherwise unidentified Frenchman who drew from him an earnest defence of the character of his father, Mad Jack Byron, from which it appears that Byron had little knowledge of that attractive rascal's conduct. All these and several more.

The letters he wrote in Italian are given in the original text as well as a good translation. There is one I have not seen before to the Contessa Borgarelli D'Ocana, begging that lady's protection for his own Contessa, who would be alone during his absence in Greece, a position unsuitable for her age or circumstances. (She was, at most, twenty-four.) The response was apparently unhelpful.

It is in this volume that we have the fateful letters in which Byron is seen gradually preparing for his last journey. Hobhouse, a founder member of the Greek Committee in London, apart from sincerely believing in the cause, recognized how it might be used as an instrument for ridding him of a friend of disreputable companions (he had encountered the Leigh Hunt family at Pisa when they were living in Byron's house—eight of them and one on the way); for stopping the scandalous progress of *Don Juan*; and for ending his Irlanda's dreamed Italian liaison.

Byron was easily enlisted by the first emissaries, Blaquière and Luriottis, but at the outset he simply intended to assist with money or "perhaps as a reporter of the actual state of things there". All his vaunted "old-gentlemanly vice" dropped away from him like the facade it was, and he was calculating only how much Kinnaird could raise for him as aid to the Greeks. "I wish to have as great command of monies of mine as I can—that I might be of some use to the Cause—and you know that Cash is the Sinew of war as indeed of most other things—love excepted, and that, occasionally of that too." (April 15, 1823, a year to the day before his death).

From sending medical supplies and asking humbly to be directed as to what he could do for Greece, he came to the decision, with a modest estimate of his influence and fewer illusions about the prospect than most of the other volunteers, to charter some kind of ship collect his followers, and sail away. The book ends with the last letters from Genoa and Leghorn. Like its predecessors it is surprisingly produced and indexed, with biographical sketches of the principal persons mentioned, a dated sequence of relevant events, and a clear list of sources: a list of forgotten too.

The vicissitudes of Godwin

By Pat Rogers

DON LOCKE:
A Fantasy of Reason
The Life and Thought of William Godwin
398pp, with 19 illustrations.
Routledge and Kegan Paul. £13.50.
0 7100 0387 0

What the professional Godwinists (for they do exist) will make of this book, I am not sure. But that still leaves 99.9 per cent of the reading public, and we can enjoy without scruple Don Locke's vivid and highly personal account of the man and the philosopher. Most of us tend to come on Godwin as an appendage to someone else. His career occupies a paragraph in the epilogue to any life of Mary Wollstonecraft; we meet him in our dealings with the firm of Shelley and Co; he is the ancient parent who gives away the bride of Frankenstein. He has, by long sanctified usage, a "circle"; but then the centre of a circle is a dot. Don Locke is right to say that "to know Godwin only through Shelley is not to know him at all"—but one sees how it comes about.

Once associated in people's minds with Paine or Bentham, Godwin has figured of late chiefly in the role of Mrs Mary Wollstonecraft. This work naturally challenges comparison with Claire Tomalin's influential study of Godwin's brilliant first wife. They ended up together, William and Mary, in a common grave at Bournemouth—the second Mrs Godwin, *pace* Claire Tomalin, having apparently been left in St Pancras churchyard.

Godwin partook the gale which Wollstonecraft was out of fashion, but his reputation has not yet pursued the triumph she has enjoyed in recent years. His character is not such an attractive one, and he lacks the consuming singleness of vision that gave her life heroic and symbolic force. But he was at least spared for another forty years, and Professor Locke brings out the full range of his achievement. He admits that the case must rest on the philosophic works, rather than the novels, essays, plays, histories and other miscellaneous writing. And he sadly concludes, with an Irish logic winning in a professional philosopher, that "as a living political theorist, Godwin is unquestionably dead". Not so, he would maintain, the fundamental moral and metaphysical content of Godwin's ideas, for (a provocative thought) "philosophical theories do not date as do those of politics and economics, nor is their impracticability any obvious barrier to their interest or importance". The aim is to show Godwin as "a philosopher's philosopher": but central to that rehabilitation is a thorough and detailed account of the life.

The major published source remains Kegan Paul's bulky compilation, *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries* (1876). These two volumes often turn up extraillustrated, and really the whole enterprise is a kind of extra-illustrated narrative. In his memoirs Paul oddly decided to let the cat out of the bag: "I undertook it, not because I admire Godwin, but because of the society of which he was the centre, and for the light which his papers threw on his time and on such people as Mary Wollstonecraft, Charles Lamb, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Bulwer, &c., &c.". This is the very mode of approach Locke wishes to combat. He has used the same family papers, but much more skilfully and observantly. Paul is himself a suitable case for biographic treatment (Christian, socialist, vegetarian, Unitarian, ultimately Catholic convert), and it is nicely appropriate that his function as biographic authority of the last resort should now be superseded by a book issued by the firm with which his own publishing company merged to establish Routledge, Kegan Paul.

There have, of course, been other lives, and the academic turnover in Shelley and Byron studies has ensured that Locke has new insights as well as fresh anecdotes. He has used his opportunity well: inevitably, some of the ground is well trodden (this is especially true of the Shelley episodes, even for a reader like me, who must rank among the world's leading 84,000 Shelley scholars), but there is hardly any sense of staleness. The author's strong commitment keeps his manner of proceeding vigorous, and his willingness to see Godwin's point of view—where so many have sided with his opponents, satellites, or relatives—means that the human aspects of the story cannot recede from attention for long.

Locke chooses to give us not so much an odyssey of ideas as a personal characterization in which ideas serve crucially to mould character. It is the biography of an intellectual, rather than an intellectual biography, as sometimes (too narrowly) conceived. We begin with a chapter on the central touchstones, Reason, Truth, and Justice. As the narrative unfolds, we revisit conceptual areas whenever explication of a particular text demands it: but the author is enough of a philosopher not to speak of the things which cannot be said, appropriately, in a particular biographic context.

He might have had a difficult task on his hands, since the two surviving books (*Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams*) occur early, even before the Mary Wollstonecraft episode. In this sense, Godwin's career has that gently declining trajectory which can easily dissipate a reader's interest, and leads to lopsided books about lopsided lives. Locke's answer is to press on with the facts, and to show how successive stages in Godwin's outlook mesh into one another. He argues the toss with his subject, disperses a little judicious praise and blame, compares him (favourably) with Bentham, establishes a connection with this or that thinker, might almost think, another story, screenplay by Gore Vidal? A few years later it was Fenimore Cooper. In the meantime it has been Lady Caroline Lamb, another seemingly invented extra in an already overloaded cast-list; Disraeli; fleetingly the youthful Carlyle. There is scarcely anyone one has heard of who does not encounter Godwin, sooner or later.

But as new contacts are made, the old drop off. Godwin has only to establish a worthwhile relationship, and the other will (older or younger) infallibly die. As well as Mary, there are Shelley, Hazlitt, Coleridge, James Mackintosh, Holcroft, Lamb, James Marshall—not to mention a succession of juvenile adherents. Worst of all is a plague of suicides, some Wertherina, some scandalous, some unaccountable. It is almost like a grim farce when, one after another, Godwin's relatives and acquaintances plunge themselves into the river or into the Serpentine, or take laudanum, or put a gun in their mouth, or make away with themselves in a sleeping Cambridge college. There are bungled suicide pacts, half-willed failures, and then again the gruesomely total success.

The saddest case was that of Fanny Godwin, daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and Gilbert Imlay. Godwin had brought her up, and her gesture was unmistakably an indictment of his household: but he bore the event with his accustomed stoicism, as though such calamities were sent to prove his own determinist logic, or to hasten the distance humanity had to travel before happiness and justice should prevail. Still the deaths went on, including that of Hazlitt, who had composed an elegy for Godwin's early fame in *The Spirit of the Age* ("he is to all ordinary intents and purposes dead and buried"). By the end, Godwin is hanging on almost alone: almost, because Mary Jane, his second wife, survived too—the woman so despised by the gilded circle he departed. (It is one virtue of Locke's book that he can suggest some reasons why Godwin could have been happy with Mary Jane.) But all the other great figures have expired, and one feels tempted to utter the cry of Venetian audiences as the curtain fell on a tragedy: "Bravi i morti!"

No one could deal equally well in the compass of a single book with every aspect of such a crowded life. Locke is perhaps least equipped for the literary bearings of his subject. He does deal amusingly with the tragedy *Antonio*, having the sense to vacate the narrative in favour of Lamb's famous account of the first night. But he tends to read the novels a shade literally, looking for direct fits for the characters, and turning the psychological drama of *Caleb Williams* into case-histories towards a metaphysical inquiry. It is true that Godwin, like his daughter Mary after him, did use real-life situations, thinly transformed, and that the rhetoric of his fiction has to serve an underlying philosophic programme. But there is a rhetoric, and some loose application of technical terms ("at times almost stream-of-consciousness in style") fails to convey accurately Godwin's power of imaginative realization. (Similarly the contrast between the prose of Paine and that of Burke—"more lively, because less ornate"—does not take us very far.) On the credit side one should mention the exceedingly precise chronology, which enables the reader to chart the composition of individual works often to a single day. Some of the material derives from the bibliographic investigations of Burton R. Pollin (whose utility to the whole enterprise is generously acknowledged), but this is the most convenient presentation of the data we have yet had.

Locke's own style is sharp and functional. His fondness for the word *prestigious* in its new acceptation may irritate some, as will occasional lapses into a chummy journalese ("daughter Mary doggedly insists . . . another impressive first for the Godwins"). More serious perhaps is a repeated anachronistic use of "left-wing", distracting not because the term had yet to evolve when Godwin was at Hoxton Academy in the 1770s, but because the categories it relies upon were only beginning to take an appropriate form in men's minds. It should be added that the shortish chapters employed throughout, far from creating a bitty or episodic effect, serve to dramatize Godwin's vicissitudes in a wholly apt manner.

It is unlikely, for all Locke's skilful advocacy, that many of us will be tempted to adopt Godwin's principles. The author's candour recognizes many of the difficulties in so doing; and, besides, we mostly reject the Godwinian ideal not because it is too perfect but because (in our own terms) it represents a far from perfect order, where little or no place is accorded to loyalty, personal attachment or emulation of others. Godwin's hatred of kings and priests appears to derive from their capacity to inspire affection and devotion in people: like other political millenarians, he resents the cementing factors in existing society, and dismisses them as inauthentic and alienating precisely because they obstruct progress towards the new society on his own model.

But the test of success for a work such as this is not that it should cause us to espouse the philosophic tenets of its subject. What matters is that a particular thinker should be allowed to speak to us, philosophically and humanly, in ways that were precluded by our ignorance or impatience. A fantasy can be more potent than a realistic appraisal of possibilities: an ineffectual angel can utter more than an effectual sophist. Two respondent merits in Professor Locke's book are that he is biographer enough to give us Godwin in context, and that he is philosopher enough to give us Godwin straight, sans context, sans circle, sans *Zeitgeist*, sans wars of ideas, sans Peacock pie and Scotch reviewers—in a word, sans waffle.

The novelist as superman

By David Seed

STEPHEN DONADIO:
Nietzsche, Henry James, and the Artistic Will
319pp. Oxford University Press. £6.95.
0 19 502358 7

In December, 1915, having had at least two strokes, Henry James began dictating letters to his secretary under the delusion that he was Napoleon. We could regard this event as mere senility, or, more interestingly, the last hallucinatory exercise of will in a life devoted to creating what Leon Edel has described as an "imperium of letters". The sheer single-minded pursuit of his craft led James to reject more worldly inducements like marriage or easy commercialism, and, surprisingly, this psychological aspect of his career, together with its implied faith in the power of art, have received little critical attention.

Stephen Donadio's comparative study of James and Nietzsche sets out partly to fill that gap. Donadio places James within the American transcendentalist tradition, arguing that he was not a novelist of manners and that, like Nietzsche, he believed that art had a unique power to give order and meaning to life. Of course, Nietzsche and James make very surprising bedfellows: Donadio insists, however, that on an influence but on a series of important similarities in their beliefs about the self and the power of art.

In other words this book is a contribution to the history of ideas rather than a work of criticism. Donadio links Nietzsche and James through the intermediary figure of Emerson, arguably an important influence on both writers. In spite of strenuous efforts to outline a "climate of ideas" which would connect Nietzsche and James more explicitly, an outline which includes very interesting discussions of William James, Vernon Lee, F. W. H. Myers, and others, the book ultimately splits into two halves.

One half charts Nietzsche's intellectual development from a starting-point that God is dead, through his scepticism about historical culture, to the positing of a superman and a final belief in the supremacy of art. This discussion is very closely argued, covering a wide range of Nietzsche's works.

The second half of the book, that dealing with James, lacks this detailed closeness of argument, but has a much firmer sense of context. Donadio examines the American notion of culture as development of the self without the limitations or impediment of society, in Emerson, in Whitman, Hawthorne and Thoreau briefly, and in William James. This context supports his argument that Henry James chose to be a man without a country, that he favourably contrasts the "free spirits" in his fiction with characters entangled in actuality, and that his famous pronouncement to H. G. Wells that "it is all that *makes* life" is a literal belief, not just hyperbole.

Donadio's description of these elements in James is not particularly original, but his volume pinpoints James's underlying beliefs very clearly, especially his idealistic conviction that humanity ought to realize itself fully and that the artist was the figure who could most nearly achieve this. Here a difficulty arises in Donadio's discussion. At one point he argues that James was trying to reach an overall perspective but, since this was impossible, resigned himself to living vicariously through other characters' perspectives. At another point, however, we are told that James *did* manage to reconcile the perspectives in the artist's consciousness. It is difficult to locate the level of discussion here. The first proposition suggests that James's fiction offered him psychological compensation for his failure to manage his ideal, whereas the second describes the form of his fiction as a realization of his idea. The confusion grows out of a comparison between philosophical texts (what's Donadio's analysis is impeccable) and works of fiction. In the latter he would have to consider among other things the interplay between worldly failure and artistic achievement, and between limited perspective and James's equally limited commitment. James criticized his brother William for reacting to *The Bluebeards* "as if an artistic experiment were a piece of conduct, to which one's life were somehow committed".

That distinction is all-important for the present volume. In fact Donadio confines himself mainly to non-fictional texts (the prefaces, letters, etc) where he is on much safer ground. Inevitably his comparison between Nietzsche and James raises more interesting issues with the latter than his book can deal with. Its great value is in defining an approach and suggesting a different way of viewing James's beliefs about art. But it needs a more substantial and sophisticated discussion of his fiction than the brief remarks on Maggie Verver which we are offered to make this approach bear fruit.

A chain of loves and deaths

By Valentine Cunningham

SHIRLEY HAZZARD :
The Transit of Venus.
337pp. Macmillan. £6.95.
0 333 27511.

Great big novels aren't necessarily great novels. But when, like "A phrase" in that phrase of Auden's, they go "packed with meaning like a van" they stand some chance of greatness. *The Transit of Venus*, coming as richly freighted as it does with multi-layered meanings for the unpacking (one hesitates to say for the *deconstructing*: it sounds so close to *destroying*), has the weighty feel of great fiction. Shirley Hazzard unmisgivingly bites off more than most serious novels nowadays care to chew, importantously but unflaggingly pursuing a group of acquaintances and lovers through three or four decades of post-war England—the era of the scholarship boy (Ted Tice), the colonial immigrant (the Australian sisters, Grace and Caro Bell), and the smudging out of an Empire at the hands of awful Foreign Office chappies like Christian Thrale.

Put like that the novel might begin to sound like just another provincial revival with the Iris Murdoch Touring Company. But its allegiances don't really run in that direction: they belong with the relish of a Nadine Gordimer for the beloved tactilities of a richly things world, the zesty fascination of a D. H. Lawrence for the colour of a woman's dress against the appreciated sensuosities of her skin, the attention of some unabashedly guilt-free Proust to the feel and smell of a woman ("Is it perfume from a dress?": yes, it certainly is).

People's realities are weighed in with the thick Jamesian detail of the things that implicate them. Even their names have materiality – Ivory, Cartledge, Bell, Ingot:

> Major Ingot was thickly built, though in no martial way, having a cirrified paunch and large pinkish fowl. Within the restaurant doorway he cut the oval sweep of a watermelon. His scalp was smooth except for a splaying of strands over the crown; his eyes, a hurt blue, were the eyes of a drunken child. At table he spread short hands on the menu, flattening out this plan of attack. A wedding-ring was already tight on his finger, like a knot tied there to remind, on the circlet on a homing pigeon. His neck made a thick fold over his collar. Everything about him was contained, a fullness tied and bound.

Things have moral substance. Angrily scooping into it, young Paul Ivory fails the test, as it were, of the Jar of Marmite his father brings back from his Japanese POW camp. Tertia, his wife-to-be, "handled objects or pushed doors with punitive abruptness, seeing no reason to indulge an uncomplaint world", and is likewise found wanting. The fact that Tice can repair a table, or Caro iron a frock—in the face of Tertia's hoity-toity sneering about manual labours—is much in their favour. There is a social point, of course. Tertia is the rich girl literally in her castle, and Tice and the Bell girls are the poor equally literally at her gate in the Thrale house. But it's as much a matter of respect for the mere thisness of the world that's at issue: a set of material presences that the Browningesque densities of Shirley Hazzard's style keep announcing and endorsing. Nothing is too common or unclean; every thing and every sound will live with the triumphing presence of a roasted Marmite jar or the planked-down emphasis of the monosyllabically called Brits on the Algarve—Gwen, Glad, Dot, Daph, Trish and Meg.

Naturally, the style calls attention to itself. A self-consciously crafted affair, the writing is hardly likely to avoid being consciously literary. Caro loses her virginity near Avebury, and is "Maiden no more", like Hardy's Tess who had dealings with Stonehenge. Yeats's "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz" is repeatedly used to place women, particularly Grace and Caro: "both Beautiful, one a gazelle". As the blinds of Empire are drawn down, the shadow of bad imperialist verse keeps falling mockingly across this Australian novelist's text ("Then he hated her for her liberty and her looks and her happiness, and that remark about the teapot. The Gatling jammed: words would not so much as sputter").

Above all, Christian references and Biblical texts pile up. Grace and Caro ("Caro was becoming flesh"), Paul (one of Caro's lovers), Adam (Caro's husband), Christian (Grace's husband), carpentering Ted ("Runs in families": "As in the Holy Family"), the South American poet who "led captivity captive", talk of the "propitiatory" and "deliverance", Caro's prized painted angel from Seville: hintfully they draw our attention to possible meanings for the repeated drownings and pilgrimings round which they cluster. "She leadeth me beside the still waters", thinks Christian of Grace.

But most of the novel's waters are turbulent ones. The Bell sisters lost their parents when a Sydney ferry went down. Christian has an affair with a typist he quickly throws back into "the pool", the Titanic and the Tirpitz are recalled, Paul lets a lover drown, Caro's marriage plunges Ted into despair ("He went under"), the novel ends as a disaster—headed plane takes off with "a long hiss of air—like the intake of humanity's breath when a work of ages shrivels in an instant; or the great gasp of hull and ocean as a ship goes down". (Or, as we may say, when a novel ends.) So many drownings and downings: and yet, with an impressive ambivalence, life and new lives go unglumly on; even with a kind of resurrection life according to "the inevitable Corinthians" read at Christian's father's funeral—a resurrection confidently mocked in the civil service jargon for Christian's career success, "Christian is rising", "Christian has risen".

So it goes with the transits that substantiate the novel's plot. Disasters in transit, by ship and plane, are many. The novel's title and the astronomers Tice and Professor Thrale with whom the novel opens refer to the failure of Captain Cook's journey to observe the rare passage of Venus across the sun. All the novel's to-ings and fro-ings confess a modern displacement: "That's not travel, it's dislocation". One of the novel's many practised conferands lays heavily into the international congress: an "improvident, and peculiarly injurious racket, designed to support the moral and mental degenerates of our modern world". But, missing Venus, Cook found Australia, and our two Australians, continually in transit, make delightful Venuses, constantly discovered, repeatedly finding for themselves the delights of sexual transaction and congress.

So, too, with words. Hansi, the ranter against congresses, denounces organized "windbaggery": the ineffectual babble of travelling intellectuals, "mouths agape". The novel keeps enacting the vulgar distorting of words—*figgers, kewpongs, rooep, coo de grass*. Words crumble into sudly conventional bits. "Dotted it, dotted it. Simply dotted it", people say after a party. Language dulls heavily into worn-out codes: into Professor Thrale's dated idioms ("Lombard Street to a China orange"; "all round China to get to Charing Cross"), Major Ingot's military hospital metaphors about making your bed and taking your medicine, the trite civil service pomposities of Christian and his kind. It keeps being demonstrated that running the office, say, or composing a distraught to night-stand, makes an event that, like the novel's entire chain of loves and deaths, rubbed so clichés smooth by habituation that clichés even mere relics of accustomed phrasings ("We mustn't date to Let things get out of. This seems no useful. Cordelia do be"), to be held to do quite nicely, thank you.

And yet Hansi devotes himself to living words, to palindromes and double crostics. And this novel's run of what it calls "such sad griefs" manages impressively to keep animated its world of the emptied word and the usual fiction's case. "Both Beautiful, one a gazelle": the novel's rhythms are widely drawn into Yeats's: "Two women, who were both beautiful, one was his wife"; "Two women were silent, one seated, one standing". And Yeats's empty old adjective is topped up brimful with Yeats's own kind of infected resonances. "Yes, the dress is beautiful", practised Cartledge tells Caro, not hesitating to put in the word it misgave the young Paul to use.

The north-south show

By Craig Brown

MELVYN BRAGG :
Kingdom Come
351pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.50.
436 06714 5

From the start, this novel is firmly in the Bragg tradition. "Lately Betty had begun to wake up much earlier than she needed to", begins the first paragraph. This is the fifth Bragg novel to start with someone waking up. As the third part of a trilogy (though self-contained), *Kingdom Come* still maintains the Cumbrian base, though the most interesting characters to reader and, one suspects, author are those who have forsaken the "rural blankness" of the country for the "urban flash" of London. One reviewer has claimed that Bragg's Cumbria is as powerful as Hardy's Wessex: even Bragg seems to be doubting that now. The descriptions of urban life are far keener, and more plentiful. Every now and then, having enjoyed writing about a marital tiff in London, the author seems suddenly to remember his base and to force his characters to board a train so that they can have a marital tiff in Cumbria. Towards the end of the book, the one member of the young generation of the Tallentire family to have stayed in Thurston, Harry, a decent, honest man and a dull character who has so far been neglected, is suddenly ushered his own chapter, an account of a local strike which, though neat in itself, bears little relation to the rest of the story.

Bragg has aimed to make *Kingdom Come* more "panoramic", to quote the blurb, than his previous novels—"sweeping from the fells to Madison Square Gardens, from strip joints to quiet walks, from the public world to the painful working out of complex private relationships". There are many major characters, or couples, each in a different walk of life, each at a different level of discontent. They might meet via a business deal, or back home in Cumbria, but their individual experiences encroach only rarely: the book remains a bundle of short stories grouped around each other but existing independently for want of a theme. That is not to say that there are not moments of fine writing: the grim character of Lester, a bitter dreamer and loser on the fringes of media society, is in turn funny and deeply depressing; the silent torment of John Tallentire, as he grows older and more crippled, is evoked in all its pain and misery.

But behind most of Bragg's writing there is a grating assumption that most people, most problems, are explicable in a few lines. Each new character is introduced with a quick, pithy physical description, followed by a jotted case-history and an explanation of attitudes and personality so brief yet so certain as to be glib. Douglas Tallentire's girl friend, Hilda, had "slowly . . . built a life for herself. Gone to night-school and then taken a correspondence course, taken herself abroad, gone to museums, caught onto learning at its fringes and held on tight. This had taken up her twenties". In a couple of short paragraphs summarizing her character we learn that "There had been one real affair and she had spoiled it by asking too much from it. All the excuses were good ones: she was too young, she was extraordinarily nervous about committing herself, he was too young, he was unsure, he was not interested in music or books or paintings, as she increasingly was." The one aspect of Douglas's life which evades this technique of instant enlightenment—the unexplained death of an old schoolfriend—is mentioned only occasionally: what could have suggested the mystery of things is nervously maintained as a meagre gesture towards profundity.

Melvyn Bragg's writing has been described by various critics as "graceful", "remarkable" and "brilliant". But too often it fractures grammar, or repeats itself, so as to contrive an air of earthiness: "The church itself, it was hinted—no disrespect whatsoever to Jennie—but the church itself had never been so clean"; and "You were never, he would say to Betty most sternly, especially when she was asking for help, you were never finished in a garden". Another jarring habit is the incessant formulation of what might best be described as global inventories:

> . . . and yet they all lived, they all found accommodation in and out of the government buildings and the factories, the flyovers and museums and airports, the banks and offices and sewers, the markets and schools and homes. In this metropolis, the impact of the most generalized and the most particular, the plainest and the most perverse, the most boring and the most titillating, the dullest and the most stimulating, the lousiest, meanest, most squalid and nastiest, and the noblest, finest, most altruistic and best was there to be felt and seen and experienced every day.

Thus humdrum list-making masquerades as grand perception.

The central conflict of *Kingdom Come* is between Douglas and his wife, Mary, a couple still in love but aware of their incompatibility. Some of the dialogue is deadly accurate; much of the agony creeps into the reader's mind; but by the end of the book the same conversation seems to have been repeated ad and time again, and on top of this sympathy, or at least interest, has been sought for the specific professional problems of a television producer, quite apart from women such as this, exhibited after paying a restaurant bill: "'Thirty pounds' he said 'was as much as my good father earned in his first year of employment—eighty two hours a week. . . . Now what sense is there in all that? Bewilderment, guilt, and finally a lack of real concern. That's all. Isn't it?'" In contriving his panorama, Bragg has given his readers a bit of everything, but the whole of nothing at all.

Phallocentricity

By Richard Brown

J. P. DONLEAVY :
Schultz
376pp. Allen Lane. £5.95.
07139 1169 7

Past reviews of J. P. Donleavy have been almost unanimous in their nostalgia for his first novel, *The Ginger Man*. This is not a little ironic for the *TLS* reviewer of the 1963 unexpurgated version of that book found in it the same faults that have subsequently been noted in the later ones. His objection was that its hero Sebastian Dangerfield, though apparently a rebel, had no substantial aim or motive in his revolt.

It is not so much Donleavy that has changed but the rest of us. In the 1950s and early 1960s, with the birth of *Playboy* magazine in 1956, the Penguin *Lady Chatterley* in 1960 and the first English edition of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* in 1963, it was interesting and productive to explore a peculiarly male erotic fantasy and to participate in the triumph of a movement against the censorship of sexuality in literature that had been active since Ibsen. Few of the inchoate angers and rebellions of that time have weathered well and recently in the field of sexuality by far the most intelligent contributions have been those not of *Playboy* liberalism but of feminist writers and critics.

To feminists the presentation of sexuality in *Schultz* will be a good hunting-ground for examples of male-dominated ideology. Women are described almost exclusively in terms of their legs, bottoms and breasts and their sketchy personal details resemble nothing so much as the captions to nude photographs in men's magazines or the popular press. Marriage is a trap and resistance to the hero's advances merely a way of baiting that trap. Throughout the word "cunt" is used as an insult and Sigmund Schultz, whose name suggests one of those American Jewish slang words for the penis and recalls the nineteenth-century explosives inventor Eduard Schultze, is an embodiment of phallocentricity. With these characteristic likes and (notably homosexual) dislikes, Donleavy sets up, under the guise of liberality, an institutionalized notion of sexual normality which is barely less tyrannical than the Victorian.

The sexual fantasy also directs the presentation of wider social realities. "If only screwing women did not result later in my getting fucked in so many other disastrous ways", Schultz at one point complains. If Wordsworth would have us born "trailing clouds of glory", Donleavy characters seem to arrive with unlimited supplies of money, which they proceed (with the full suggestion of the Victorian pun) to spend. Perhaps this is why Donleavy is so interested in a fantasy version of an urbane English aristocracy of which Lord Nectarine of Waltham Green and Binky are the representatives in this novel.

His geographical locations are, as usual, touristique. Here fashionable West London is the scene, which, though it appears in some detail, is populated by such clichés as the taxi driver who says "Hey Gov". The mild apostasy from the rules of prose composition that we have come to expect in Donleavy is also present in *Schultz*. The truncated sentences which lack a finite verb or which have it replaced by a participle, do allow for some quite varied lyric, comic and erotic effects. The internal rhymes can also be quite amusing, but those against questions of the last sentence in each chapter where prose is set as poetry seem little more than a gimmick. The best example of Donleavy's famous alliterative names in *Schultz* is Lady Lulu Lullabybaby, but as a character she is little more than a pale reflection of Shaw's marvellous (if equally alliterative) Hesione Hushabye from *Heartbreak House*.

The hero's struggle to finance a West End show, which provides (besides the sexual encounters) the plot of the novel, is ultimately greeted with a precarious success and he waits with anticipation for the reviews. These "stink". "Every one but two. One written by an imbecile. And the other by a guy thought he was writing about some other show." Through some surprising editing, Schultz succeeds in making the hostile critics read like praise.

In this comic moment, though, the recognition is forced upon us that Schultz, with all his comic vulgarity and stereotypical American brashness, is meant to stand in some self-parodic way for the author, or even for all authors. Significantly Donleavy does not make the more immediately obvious choice of playwright or theatrical director for the artist figure: Schultz is a producer (indeed one of the show's ill-fated directors comes off rather badly as an "ignorant pretentious fucker"). It would be almost the opposite of the truth and not a little perverse to suggest some connection with here with Walter Benjamin's Marxist notion of "The Author as Producer" but at least we can say in Donleavy's favour that his self-portrait as impresario does something to deflate aesthetic literary cant.

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In the uniform of the disarmed

By John Bayley

TOM PAULIN:
The Strange Museum
51pp. Faber. £3.50.
0 571 11511 X

For poets to be seen by outsiders as constituting some sort of group, even though the poets themselves may not think they do, can only be in our time an unfortunate thing. It jeopardizes that wholly first-hand response that we have come to associate with the successful and authentic poet. It is no good nowadays the poet telling us, as members of an Elizabethan or Augustan school could do, "what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed". Why this should be so is a complex problem, but one consequence of it is "confessional" poetry: it is logical that the poet can be authentic on the subject of himself, even though it takes a uniquely good poet—a Lowell or a Berryman or a Larkin—to be, in a poem, completely himself. Eliot, we can now see, was that in *The Waste Land*. His "grumble" was unique, even though by being unique in that form it achieved a kind of universal recognition and became everyone else's grumble too.

Yeats, on the other hand, did begin by voicing the sentiments and living in the atmosphere of a school. It took years of patience and cunning to exile himself into his own kind of absolute individuality. The Celtic Twilight of our time has produced a group of poets from the northern province of Ireland who are much aware, as poets, of a collective provenance, a heredity from which there is no escape. Rightly, perhaps. Seamus Heaney and Tom Paulin, two quite dissimilar poets of very real distinction, would not wish to establish or to claim an individuality outside the legacy they were born into. They would want to make poetry out of that quarrel, out of that particular way of being held by the leg. They would not wish to do what Yeats did in "Easter 1916", to wait until the rising had become in poetry completely himself, completely his own reaction to it. The objects in their poetry, like the issues, remain hard and clear and commonplace, though seen with a very bright eye.

This is perhaps to make rather heavy weather of the situation, which is the last thing that either Heaney or Paulin do. On the contrary, their poems make light of the darkness out of which they come; they are sardonic, even graceful. And yet in a curious way this tone, just because of its irony, its gentleness even, has something standardized about it. It is the tone that our culture adopts as it tries to extricate itself from an inextricable situation. By avoiding the weight of expression—

Out of Ireland have we come.
Great hatred, little room,
Maimed us at the start....

—the destiny of provenance settles on a generic tone that, poetically speaking, is soon predictable. Tom Paulin is, I think, fully conscious of this, for, as he puts it of the two sides in "A Partial State", the guidelines are drawn in an unending inevitability.

Never forget that
Irony is the weapon
Of the disarmed, that yours are
blunter instruments, dourness.

In "Surveillances" he writes of the kinds of watch kept in a town like Belfast, and concludes:

And if you would swop its functions
For a culture of bungalows
And light verse.
You know this is one
Of the places you belong in.
And that its public uniform
Has claimed your service.

The comparative looseness has become part of the tone, and its acceptance of a collective awareness, Paulin's feelings are wholly sincere but somehow not his own, nor would they even seem to wish to be his own. In many of the poems of *The Strange Museum*, much less so in his last collection, *A State of Justice*, one is struck both by how good they are and yet how necessarily approximate, falling in their last lines into something quite expected, like an articulate journalist saying the only possible thing at the end of his piece. To fall back on the obvious may be an honourable course but for a poet it is also a dangerous one. He has, if possible, to wear his uniform with a difference, as Ungaretti said he wore the uniform of Italy. It is significant that some of the best poems in *The Strange Museum*, like "Traces", and "Hidden Face", enter movingly and imaginatively into consciousness in India. Perhaps Paulin can do that through insight acquired in wearing his country's "public uniform".

Something of the outcome of a song or street ballad, but transformed into civilized commentary, attends a number of these sort of Ulster poems—Heaney's too. The first two stanzas of "Surveillances" are admirable poetic reportage, word and meaning both singular and taut; the third closes its ranks and makes the kind of point that goes with that formation. The possibility of "light verse" (whatever that may mean in this context) is banished along with the sheltered futility of suburbia, and however proper this conclusion it does not seem to go with the single truth of perception that lights the scene in the other stanzas. The same is true of the first poem in the book, "Before History", where the poet wakes early with the sense of suspension before the inevitable kind of events begin.

I lie in a curtained room.
The city is nowhere then.
Somewhere, in a dunk *mitteleuropa*,
I have gone to ground in a hidden
street.

But that sense is succeeded by the commentary.

... Knowing that love is as distant
As the guarded capital, knowing
That the tyranny of memories
And factual establishments
Has stretched to its breaking.

Part of the trouble may be that Paulin is now too easy altogether with his line and stanza forms. They are merely a minimal noise to make in the background, like the sound of a guitar. Compare the superb peculiarity of stanza and non-rhyme in Larkin's poem "Homage to a Government", about bringing the soldiers home. "For lack of money, and it is all right". Nor would it be unfair to compare this kind of poem of Paulin's with the best in Craig Raine's recent collection, "Flying to Belfast 1977", which gives an extraordinary sense of the terror of that town, its immovable geography and history, without resorting to overt comment of any kind but by subjectivizing the experience in terms of the solipsism of a descending aircraft.

Tom Paulin's publisher provides a fatal accolade on the back of the volume by calling him "a profoundly serious poet". That is just the trouble. It is probably not the publisher's fault, still less the poet's: they know that the public are impressed by the idea of profoundly serious poetry. But in the context of poetry the word has no meaning whatsoever. One might as well talk of a profoundly serious surgeon, a profoundly serious anaesthetist. As a patient, one would prefer one who knew his job. Yeats was not being profoundly serious when he wrote "The best lack all conviction, while the worst/Are full of passionate intensity". In the course of what is a remarkably delightfully, silly poem about the Second Coming, in which he did not believe for a moment, except as a subject for a poem, he happened to enunciate a truth which we all instantly recognize. Something like it might have been said, at great length and in measured sentences, in a *Times* leader, but it happens to come out perfectly in the context of a superb poem.

There is no doubt whatever that Tom Paulin does know his job. The poems in this collection have indeed begun to take themselves seriously, and with markedly delightful effect. There is nothing like this as good as the excellent poems in *A State of Justice*, poems like "Antrim", "Newness", "Venice Funerals", "A Seaside House", or "Bradley the last Idealist", with its surrealist picture of the philosophy stalking cats at night with an air gun:

An absolute guaranteed by rust
and tripod
Then relishing those brief fabrics of terror,
He would squeeze gently into the green mirror.

"In Antrim", by contrast, is the simplest, briefest and most moving kind of poem.

Her son is sick and she clears it up.
In twenty years, though he smiles,
He's spoken
Maybe ten different words to her.
The laugh's dying, the road's empty
Near a derelict twenties bungalow
I watch them from a distance—
Mother, brother.

Probably nothing is more maddening for a good poet than to be told by a critic that he is not as good as he has been. He must develop, even if it means trying out ways of producing non-poetry as Wordsworth and Robert Lowell did in their various ways, or accepting kinds of exploratory looseness, flexibility, solvent instability that may harden into a new kind of style. Paulin may be doing his own kind of manipulation of Owen's feeling that "the poetry does not matter", his own reconciliation of what Charles Tomlinson, in *The Art of Poetry*, called "the undoing which is not elegant" with the "nothing which is if it is merely that". His goodness and intelligence seem to be tentative in this direction as in "A Free Africa" and such a comparatively long poem as "The Other Voice", though it is not successful, shows he is entirely aware of the questions involved. (He mediates the poem through Mandelstam: a great mistake, for Mandelstam should never be used to give a ready-made atmosphere of terrorism and the aesthetic to a necessarily dull kind of poem.) But the fact remains that free-floating or instant seriousness is a risky business:

The clocks are bleeding now on
emblems of failure, tell us:
What the wrong gods established
no army can ever save.

The emphasis of italics does nothing to help, nor do the predictably loaded images that conclude a little "maritime pastoral" called "Purity".

But in the brilliant distance
I see a crowded troopship
Moving down the blue lough
On a summer's morning.
Its anal colours
Almost fresh in the sun.
Those black boots are shining.
There is only one pink—blue
Of identical features.

"Almost fresh" pretends to an irony with nothing of the surprise the ironic in poetry must have, and it is somehow the soldiers' fault (as always) that their faces are identical and only a blue. A facility has got into the language and its intention.

These are not the kinds of truth that Yeats struck on in a poem, but truisms that detract from the real "seriousness" a poem must have, and a too evidently facetious way to end them. Paulin should leave these kinds of comment to the enlightened special reporters of the Sundays, who say something same for most weeks, in the longer poem "The Other Voice", which mediates Crete, will tell him. He can also learn what Koritor purchased from the shoemaker in Poem 6 of Herodas. He can read about a reconstruction of Nestor's cup by Dionysios Thrax. He can even find the "wings of Simias" the Rhodian transferred into a shape Mrs Craik is quite interested down-to-earth, this is a disappointing collection.

Poems from Rye brings together work from earlier collections with some new poems about the town where Dickinson has lived for more than thirty years. It includes the fine "Shells from Colonsay", "Find Out Moonshine", and "Rye" (also in *Our Living John*). In "Tourists of a Sort", the Vandals make an appearance, "poor flatulent boobs" who slurp ice-cream, know nothing about Queen Anne, and keep asking the way to Woolworths: unwelcome invaders from the cities and suburbs in Dickinson's "enclave and sanctuary".

Quince

Because you were barren,
a male by a male tree, or
one female by another,
I had to cut you down,
the city's complex sounds
rising companionably behind.

Near to earth as possible,
the gardening manual said.
A hard task, kneeling with
the saw's serrated blade
to scythe thick grass and
seek out your smothered side.

A bird called, and called,
balanced upon a thorn,
A slug crawled along
my sweating hand, until
the foot was sawn, and
all your branching platform

Sunyed: but still held on.
I had to put both arms
around your lean waist
to pull you finally down.
Damp pith spirted, but
the raw stump shone.

A neighbouring appletree
shook petals on my head
as though offended to see
an old friend poorly treated.
Saw in hand, I come down
slowly, to join the town.

John Montague

Affections and apprehensions

By Wendy Cope

DAVID WRIGHT:
Metrical Observations
41pp. Carcanet. £2.95.
0 85635 309 4

PATRIC DICKINSON:
Our Living John.
32pp. Chatto and Windus. £3.
0 7011 2470 9

Poems from Rye
25pp. Martello Bookshop, 26 High St, Rye, East Sussex. £2.95 (by post, £3.25).
0 9506824 0 3

"To Africa I belong and don't belong", wrote David Wright introducing his Collected Poems, *To the Gods the Shades*, four years ago. A number of the poems in that book arose from visits to the land where he was born and spent his first fourteen years. *Metrical Observations*, published on the poet's sixtieth birthday, opens with three more.

"Notes on a Visit", the most interesting of these, is set in Johannesburg in 1976, a Johannesburg which seems unchanged on the surface and where

Only the human silhouette
Offered as a revolver target
In the sports outfitter's window
Remembers June in Soweto.

In the shadow of Soweto, Wright focuses more directly on the political situation than he has in the past. Tension builds through his description of the city at night, "Electric as America", and his encounter with a black poet, "his quality gravitas/Each of us the wrong colour./He for now, I in future", to the final section where a storm gathers and breaks. In less skilled hands it could have seemed a cliché, but Wright's language lifts it clear:

A flicker-crackle of lightning
Illumines a falling curtain,
Rain spilling on Magaliesberg
From the burst belly of a cloud.
"How fast the darkness falls", we
say.
"There's no twilight in Africa."

Short lines, rhyme and half-rhyme, enhance the poem's taut, apprehensive atmosphere. At his best Wright is a master at finding the appropriate form for his subject-matter. "Two Streams" flows through twenty-nine lines with no division into stanzas and little end-stopping. The beautiful "Lament for MacDiarmid", in which strong feeling is contained by the seven syllable lines, is a poem haunted by the sound of a pibroch keening at MacDiarmid's funeral, unheard by both poets. This is not the first time that Wright, who has been deaf since the age of seven, has made moving use of music he cannot hear.

Celebrations of friendship have been the recurring feature of his work and there are more affectionate tributes in "Zennor Revisited" and "London Recollections", two series of poems looking back to the 1940s. Wright's pictures of the metropolis in wartime are particularly striking. In a fire raid, "Lightbeams quaver and stalk like/Legs of dividers walking on a map". After a flying bomb: "Suddenly for the trees, November/All their leaves blown off." Wright is an expert story-teller: In "Bomb Story" he needs only nine lines to tell the tale of a Viennese refugee killed in the blitz. Swift changes of mood engage the reader's emotions. His lively account of a day with his friend Neil Shand—

Hailing a milk-float
He inveigles its driver. Next
minute, Shand at the reins,
Jingle and bang up Balls Pond
Road in the morning

—gives way to the stark "I never saw him again. The army/Swallowed him like the blackout." Wright is never sentimental or pretentious. He sometimes risks flatness, but the lapses in this collection are few.

One of David Wright's earlier "Gresmere Sonnets" is about the parting of Wordsworth and his brother John, who was later drowned at sea. This is "Our Living John" in the title-poem of Patric Dickinson's new collection. Here Dickinson describes how, while reading Mary Moorman's biography of Wordsworth, he became "clenched in his raw grief" at John's death. The best lines in the poem are a quotation from the earlier poet's "Elegiac Verses" on the subject, but some of Dickinson's come close:

Images for a poem crowded
Unseen, like the impotent rescuers
On the black shore.

Elsewhere Dickinson identifies with a Roman Senator, "Waiting stolidly in his chair/The Incoming of the Vandals".

The identification seems significant, for the people and artefacts of the twentieth century intrude very little into this book, which at times calls to mind a museum on a day when there are no school parties. It houses some lovely things, like the "Arcadian completeness" of Olympia, where "The nightingales are the temples/Altars are nests". But, with the exception of poems like "In the High Fields", where the tone is more

The Spartans out of barracks

By Paul Cartledge

L. F. FITZHARDINGE:
The Spartans
180pp. Thames and Hudson. £9.50.
0 500 02096 5.

ERNLE BRADFORD:
The Year of Thermopylae
255pp. Macmillan. £7.95.
0 333 23271 2.

The ancient Spartans are a sadly misunderstood people. Their shades are presumably resigned to hearing "laconic" used to characterize dourly brief utterance rather than succinct and witty repartee, but their patience with the relentless commercial exploitation of "Spartan" as a brand-name must finally have snapped when a leading English confectioner so labelled an assortment of (hard-centre) chocolates and yet shamelessly adorned the box with a view, not of Sparta, but of Corfiote.

Both the books under review are written by non-specialists for a wide audience to promote a more correct understanding of the Spartans; but though their subject-matter overlaps, their approaches diverge widely. L. F. Fitzhardinge, formerly Reader in Australian History at the Australian National University, has made an impressive contribution to the Ancient Peoples and Places series in its attractive new format. Ernle Bradford, small boat sailor and self-styled discoverer of Ulysses, has a mission to save "what is left of Western civilization" and therefore urges us to emulate the Spartans' brave response to the Persian invasion of Greece in 480-79 BC ("Without courage, Man is nothing").

Misunderstanding of the Spartans goes back at least to the fifth century BC, since when their society has been transmitted on the European cultural tradition via a series of distorting mirrors. One aspect of this *mirage spartiate* seemed to reflect nature more faithfully than the rest: the picture of Sparta as unchangingly austere, barrack-like and hostile to the arts. But discoveries of the past hundred years, first in the sands of Egypt and then at Sparta itself, have shown that this image, too, is an illusion.

One of the first scholars to perceive the discrepancy between distorted tradition and ancient reality was J. P. Mahaffy, whose life has been admirably written by W. B. Stanford and R. B. McDowell. But it was the excavations in Sparta during the first and third decades of this century by the British School of Archaeology at Athens that really caught the scholarly world by the ears. These excavations were remarkable in several ways. They were conducted by some of the leading Hellenists of the day, men like R. M. Dawkins and A. J. B. Wace. They turned up, especially at the sanctuary of Orthia, a plethora of Archaic objects, some very workaday but others of a quality to merit publication in the *Burlington Magazine*. Finally, and from the historical standpoint most important of all, the Orthia dig was the first to apply the principles of stratigraphy systematically to a classical Greek site.

As is the way with pioneers, Dawkins and his colleagues quickly attracted both excessive adulation and less than generous disparagement. But in the *Annual* of the British School for 1963 John Boardman reviewed the Orthia stratigraphy and demonstrated the essential correctness of the excavators' conclusions. There have naturally been many subsequent studies of Spartan or—to use the normal regional nomenclature—Laconian artifacts; but without the pioneers Mr Fitzhardinge's task would have been not just impossible but inconceivable.

That task is to summarize with the minimum of fuss and speculation what we can reasonably assert about Spartan culture, especially material culture, from the Dorian settlement to the fifth century BC. After briefly setting the geographical scene Fitzhardinge briskly and enjoyably discusses the pottery, terracottas, ivory and bone-carvings, stone sculpture, bronzes, and miscellaneous objects—all profusely illustrated with photographs and some original line-drawings by Christine Grishin.

There are inevitably slips (for instance, the temple of the local deity Orthia, who was assimilated to the pan-Hellenic Artemis, was not the most important in Sparta; that honour belonged to Athena, Guardian of the City, later also named Athena of the Bronzen House for her temple's wall-decoration). Still, this archaeological section of the book, apart from its purely visual interest, may perhaps enlighten those ancient historians who consider material evidence both puzzling and peripheral.

The next three chapters traverse more familiar ground, the literary evidence from Tyrtaeus in the seventh century BC to Pausanias in the second AD. Here too the treatment is confident and, in the main, convincing. To take just two examples, the charming lyric poetry composed by Alcman towards 600 is well set into its archaeological context of lively figured pottery, which was being ever more widely distributed, and an abundance of ivory and bronze personal ornaments. On the other hand, Fitzhardinge may exaggerate the extent to which Herodotus saw and represented the Spartans as normal Greeks. For Sparta is the only Greek state to be dealt with in Herodotus' ethnographic manner, when he describes the customary honours paid to the kings and remarks of one that it is common to practically all "barbarians".

A final chapter of conclusions returns to the paradox noted at the outset: "on the one hand the rude austere and narrow barrack depicted in the written sources; on the other the normal, creative and pleasure-loving society suggested by the new finds". The resolution he finds in the growing ascendancy, from the early seventh century on, of values associated with the hoplites at the expense of those held by the politically and militarily displaced aristocrats. This change in the dominant value-system was fostered by the circumstance that in Sparta, uniquely, all full citizens were hoplites, and it was rendered final by the battle of Thermopylae in 480. Thereafter aristocratic luxury was no longer at a premium, and the Laconian craftsmen were unable to respond to the new, more cosmopolitan iconographic vocabulary disseminated principally from Athens.

This interpretation is complemented and qualified by Claude Rolley's important article on the problem of Laconian art in *Ktema* for 1977, which appeared too late for Fitzhardinge to do more than mention it. Rolley swiftly surveys the development of Laconian artforms since the eighth century and stresses their extreme originality in the sixth, with special reference to the figured pottery and bronze figurines and vessels. These burst into our ken early on in the century, attain a wide distribution in the decades around 550 and, then just as suddenly disappear—the pottery by 510, the bronzes by 490. Their originality Rolley attributes to the cultural situation of the artists, a close-knit group turned in on themselves, homogeneous in beliefs, tastes and habits, and more wedded to local traditions than their counterparts in other states. The disappearance of such high-quality export wares he associates with the notorious Spartan expulsions of foreigners.

There is truth in both these interpretations, though I remain unconvinced by the shared assumption that all Laconian craftsmen were drawn exclusively from the ranks of the *perioikoi* (free but disfranchised subjects living within the borders of the Spartan state). And I would myself link the artistic transformation more closely to what Moses Finley has called the Spartan "sixth-century revolution".

By the time Herodotus visited Sparta around 450 he found a community racked by fear of the Helot enemy within and riven with social tension arising from the widening gap between rich and poor citizens. In a society where uniformity of outlook and aspiration among the ruling elite was all, conspicuous consumption by the rich had to be confined to religious and ostensibly patriotic occasions, the funerals of kings and the chariot-races at local and pan-Hellenic festivals. In this new, remodelled Sparta private patronage of the visual arts was at a discount, and the Spartan rich, as Thucydides put it, set an example for Greece in leading a life that was as much as possible like that of the ordinary people.

Public patronage was another matter, and the fine statue of a warrior in Parian marble that adorns the jacket of *The Spartans* was commissioned in the first quarter of the fifth century, about the time the Persian Stoa was built to commemorate the great victories of 480-79. From the coincidence of date and his heroic aspect the warrior was soon dubbed "Leonidas"—an identification the civic authorities of sleepy modern Sparta are far from anxious to dispute. In fact, though, "Leonidas" was probably originally part of a pedimental group carved in the 460s. None the less, his magnificent physique and strong, bearded face perfectly embody the resolute courage Mr Bradford would have us admire and imitate.

His title is slightly misleading, since he devotes considerable space to the background to Xerxes' invasion and describes in some detail not just 480, the year of Thermopylae (and Artemisium and Salamis), but also the conclusive campaigns of the year 479. But *The Year of Thermopylae* is not intended to be a scholarly or academic book. Nor is it simply a rattling good traveller's tale. It jostles for a space in the crowded publishing marketplace somewhere between these extremes—containing too many errors, questionable assertions and over-simplifications for the serious student but much that is stimulating and (homilies about the decline of the West apart) enlightening for the chimerical general reader.

The sporadic states

By George Huxley

ELIZABETH M. CRAIK:
The Dorian Aegean
265pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £25.
0 7100 0378 1

Scattered across the southern Aegean—between Crete and Caria and to the south of the Cyclades—are numerous islands; they are called by Strabo the geographer the Sporades. In Greek antiquity most were inhabited by speakers of the Doric dialect, and some were said to have been colonized from Laconia and the Argolid. Several are small: for example, Sikinos, which was revealed to be Doric as recently as 1931 by the discovery of an archaic epitaph. One was powerful and rich—Rhodes. These insular states differed widely in their cults and administrative arrangements, and the local histories of most of them are, at best, obscure.

To impose coherence upon such disparate evidence can have been no easy task, but Elizabeth Craik has organized her topics competently, and by giving plenty of space to pertinent matters from beyond her chosen domain she has added to the readability of her work. Much of interest is offered to the economic historian in the chapter on resources: the significance of Helladic and Teichines in Rhodian myth-history is explained; the influential mingling of poetry and scholarship in Philitas the Coan is appreciated; and the chapter on medicine and natural science includes a useful study in the professional thinking of the Hippocratic physicians.

If the Greekless reader wants to know what happened when two barbiddgets were introduced to Anapho by a union of Astypalaia, Mrs Craik will tell him. He can also learn what Koritor purchased from the shoemaker in Poem 6 of Herodas. He can read about a reconstruction of Nestor's cup by Dionysios Thrax. He can even find the "wings of Simias" the Rhodian transferred into English in the shape of the original figured poem.

From such diverse learning I choose a few matters for notice. The difficulty in dating the eruption of Late Minoan Thera is recognized; since cores from the sea-bed suggest that tephra was carried in an east-south-easterly direction, renewed study of the stratigraphy at Trianda in Rhodes may well help to show whether the paroxysm happened in the Late Minoan IB phase, as late as 1470 BC. Because to be a Dorian was first and foremost to be a speaker of the Doric dialect, there is difficulty in the notion that the islands of the south-eastern Aegean "had a Dorian (though perhaps not a Doric-speaking) population at the time of the Trojan War". The poets Peisandros of Kameiros in Rhodes and Panyasis of Halikarnassos cannot have been "seventh-century contemporaries", since the latter lived close in time to his kinsman Herodotus, the fifth-century historian.

We need to know who, in Mrs Craik's opinion, in the hexameters translated from the *Apollo* of Simias is claiming to have visited the distant Hyperboreans—Apollo's friend Kleinis the Babylonian is a possible speaker. The interest of Apollonius Rhodius in foundation-myths is recognized; so the eponymous Sikinos, son of the Lemnian Thoas, in *Argonautika* I deserved a mention. It is misleading to say concerning water-supply "there is a great silence in the literature": in *Politics* 1330b4-17 Aristotle takes the matter seriously. The assertion that Ptolemy used the star-catalogue of Hipparchus "extensively" is almost certainly mistaken, because only in a few instances could there have been a schematic transformation of the stellar positions given by Hipparchus. There is no reason to doubt that Ptolemy's star-catalogue was based on his own observations. Babylonian connections of Greek astronomy are mentioned, and Geminus is discussed; therefore a place could have been found for the linear zigzag function of Babylonian type given in Geminus' account of lunar motion.

I miss also a discussion of the remarkable transposition from Keskinto listing planetary parameters slabs Mrs Craik is quite interested in scientific activity in Rhodes. In the chapter on administration a discussion of the local divisions (*ktoinai* and *patrai*) at Kameiros could have formed part of a wider treatment of social structures and land-tenure. The crab who appears with Herakles on Coan coins may well be the creature sent by Hera to attack him during the labour at Lerna, because on Roman imperial coins of Cos the crab is set beside the hero's foot. It is worthy of remark that the exclusion of slaves from Coan sacrificial festivities in honour of Hera was reported by an epichoric authority, Makareus. The papyrus fragments of the *Meropis*—published in the volumes honouring H. C. Youtie—deserved attention; this hitherto unattested epic poem described the attack of Herakles on Cos and the stalwart defence of the island by a local hero, Asteros.

The foregoing comments are, like the book's insular subject-matter, sporadic; they are intended to show how well-stocked the work is. There is a helpful appendix listing cult-titles; and the bibliography is large, though of necessity selective (the fine article on some antiquities of Sikinos in the *American Journal of Archaeology* Volume 73 merited inclusion). A regional study such as this needs firm geographical support; but the only map calls the Propontis the Euxine, and on page 116, Perinthos is said to be to the north of the Black Sea. Nor are Nikaia and Assos on or near the Black Sea (page 140). The delights of the country walk in Theocritus, *Idyll* VII would not have been diminished by the inclusion of a map of Cos; then the reader, who has been told that the poem contains authentic topographical detail, could have found where Bourinna the fountain flowed from its "black rock", as Philitas described it—or at least where the spring now called Vourina comes forth.

A map of Rhodes would have reminded Mrs Craik of Vroulia, a place of interest to students of the early Greek *polis*. Let us hope therefore that the publishers and the editor of the series States and Cities of Ancient Greece will be more generous with maps and plans in future.

The spirituality of movement

By Gabriele Annan

NATALIA MAKAROVA:
A Dance Autobiography
336pp. A. and C. Black. £15.
0 7136 2058 7

Most ballet books are bought for their photographs, and so could this be: there are over 200 plates, about half by Dina Makarova—a friend, it seems, not a relation. They are stuffily framed in gold with rounded corners, but that does not detract from the stunning expressiveness of their subject.

The surprise is in the text. This is not the usual story where the little girl in the skirt falls in love with the Nutcracker prince and dreams of pink satin slippers. Makarova has produced a treatise on the aesthetics of ballet strung along an outline of her professional life. Her personal life hardly intrudes. Her marriage rates one sentence; the birth of her child is the prelude to a punishing training programme to get back her form. Her childhood and her defection take up a little more space, but that is because they have bearing on her artistic development and beliefs.

This approach might have produced a dry and inhuman book; instead it is full of Makarova's personality: sensitive, serious, funny, determined, impetuous, inquiring, thoughtful, and sometimes in a muddle: but never the madcap Russian cookie of her popular image. She worked from taped conversations with Gennady Smakov who sounds stimulating as well as sympathetic and got her to develop ideas that he himself had not suspected: "I was amazed", he says in his introduction: "behind the apparent spontaneity I found a true artist's laboratory with a rich choice of test tubes and jars from which she would, at each performance, create new combinations, prompted by her inspirations". She is unique in her ability to convey the physical difficulty of ballet, of how and why a step can seem impossible to do, of how it feels when it goes wrong. As she worked with Smakov, she learnt "to comprehend her subtle sensations that earlier had been too elusive to pin down in words". Their method is fluid like her dancing: ideas form as they go along. They come in dichotomies: classical versus romantic, Russian versus Western, Leningrad versus Moscow, heart versus head, body versus soul. There is tension and excitement all the time.

"A child of the intelligentsia", Makarova drifted into the alien milieu of ballet because the day she walked past the Kirov School there happened to be a notice up saying that applications for entry were being accepted. She was thirteen, three or four years older than the normal age: but at the beginning of the 1950s a special class for promising teenagers had been set up: the school was depleted because after the war most children were too undernourished to be able to think of ballet training. For the new class the nine-year course was shortened to six: "our study took place in a wild headlong pace . . . (and) the Vaganova method could not lead to such dazzling results as it usually did".

For Makarova, Vaganova was the last true descendant of the great Meyerhold tradition at the Kirov school which she directed. She died in 1951, two years before Makarova entered, but her pupils were still teaching. The school was "unique", because it was

> the direct continuation of Russian balletic culture. . . . Having crossed the threshold of the school you were immediately immersed in a special atmosphere, a somewhat old-fashioned, and at the same time typically Russian atmosphere of life in the service of the arts, service that was to become the purpose of *your* life. It pushes everything personal, all your day to day concerns, into the background.

When a pupil got her first tiny part—perhaps a mouse in *The Nutcracker*—on the Kirov stage, "it was like taking a sacrament". The sense of quasi-religious dedication, echoes earlier memoirs, Karsavina's, for instance. Makarova perpetually contrasts it with the more mundane Western approach. It informs the very way technique is taught:

> From the first lesson we were warned against a formal execution of a movement, even if it was a mere *battement tendu*. Formalism is alien to Russian culture in general. . . . The ability to sense a movement, no matter how simple, and to fill it with spiritual meaning was developed step by step, by hard everyday training. . . . Essentially, it is a capacity of the body to generate a specific kind of energy in movement that affects an observer.

Years later, teaching *La Bayadère* to American dancers, Makarova explained "that it is, for instance, not permissible to perform an arabesque in a formal manner—instead it should exude flight, lightness, purposefulness. This was a revelation to them. They did not understand . . . the difference between 'executing steps' and 'dancing steps'." That, in a nutshell, is the difference between Russian and Western dancing. It means, among other things, that Western dancers are taught to keep strict time, whereas Russians may extend a movement beyond the beat. The unbroken flow of Russian dancing is admired in the West, but London critics can come down on Russians (quite often on Makarova) for their eccentric tempi when they dance with the home team. It is a relief to have the Russian rationale explained.

Russian schooling distinguishes very sharply between the romantic and classical styles within the classical tradition. (At this point the nomenclature can become confusing, especially as in ballet chronology the romantic age—*Giselle*, *La Sylphide*—precedes the classical—*Swan Lake*, *La Bayadère*.) The difference between a romantic and a classical ballerina is almost as great as between a soprano and a contralto, and they are differently trained. Makarova was classed as romantic, and Giselle became her favourite and most typical role. It came naturally to her, whereas Odette/Odile did not. The romantic ballet has simpler steps; it requires less precision ("Les bras inachevés"—a lovely phrase), more fluidity, more elevation, and "a free-floating torso". Exactly what this means can be seen on photographs of Makarova leaping: her face looks out from the soaring movement like a passenger's from a moving train. "The whole poetics of romantic ballet tend to be elusive and indefinite", and there is room for individual variations and emphasis. Classical ballet needs a stronger, more athletic dancer with faultless legs under her shorter tutu: the steps are more difficult and there are more of them (Makarova aptly says that the texture is denser), while the poses are more sculptural and static: more control and balance are required as well as more speed and accuracy.

The other day a London critic praised a principal of the Royal Ballet for struggling to extend her range by attempting roles for which she was not ideal. No Russian dancer would ever be praised for such a thing; or even be given a chance to try. But Makarova's range was exceptional and she was one of the very few Kirov ballerinas who was allowed to dance both the great romantic and the great classical roles. Even so, she got bored with her restricted repertoire and longed for more varied and modern work—but not in dreary, ludicrous ballets about heroic Soviet sailors and astronauts. From the early 1960s she saw the Kirov standards declining. The old imperial tradition began to die out as Vaganova's pupils retired: the whole style of the school and the company coarsened. On the other hand, the Soviet arts policy was dismally conservative, especially towards their classical show-piece, the Kirov ballet (the Bolshoi was given more scope for innovation). "Frantic boredom and weariness were building up inside me": Makarova had let several previous chances to defect go by, but by 1970 she was ready to do it—for purely artistic reasons: she makes that absolutely plain.

She did it in London, but it was the American Ballet Theatre that offered her an engagement. Adaptation was difficult, partly because of her Russian training with its emphasis—like Method acting—on *feeling* everything, including style.

> I did not have the ability to switch immediately from one style to another. I saw that the leading dancers of ABT passed easily from classic to neo-classic or modern ballets without delving deeply into the subtleties of their respective styles. Technically they could perform any combinations of movements. . . . Their purely rational approach was highly economical in comparison with the Russian school.

Disapproval and admiration are mingled here.

However, there was one thing the Western or rather John Neumeier and Anthony Tudor when she worked with them in their ballets—could teach her, and that was that restraint can be as effective as pouring oneself out. The discovery improved her performances in *Giselle* and *Swan Lake*—"the old classical ballets are like classical literature; after a certain time one rereads them differently".

By far her most exciting artistic encounter was with Balanchine. There are several pages of a dozen pp. argued *Auseinandersetzung* with his work, which start with this evaluation:

> For me, Balanchine is a genius, because he alone in the twentieth century has created a unique style and a choreographic language the richness and inventiveness of which never fail to astonish. . . .
>
> I never cease to be enchanted by Balanchine's taste and by that choreographic musicality . . . he is the only person who has gone beyond Petipa. Balanchine used the old principle of classical ballet — "beauty in the geometry of movement and the geometry of beauty" with contemporary perception. He brought classical ballet to America and created an audience for it there. More, he created his own ballet culture and it became part of American culture.

But in spite of all this, he is not the choreographer who suits her: his work is too cerebral, too abstract, there is too little scope for personal expression, the technique required is too mechanical and disconnected for a dancer trained for "cantilena" dance. And finally her intellectual tussle with what he stands for enables her to define what she stands for:

> I personally cannot accept this escape into "pure beauty" . . . The imperfections of real life, its conflicts, human dramas and emotions still move me, and I want to tell about them in the language of the dance. . . . In my hierarchy of art, emotional values are placed much higher than abstract or formal ones.

The actor Cary Grant, 1932, by Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976); from Judy Dater's pictorial memoir of the noted American photographer: Imogen Cunningham—A Portrait (126pp and 60 plates. Gordon Fraser. £12.50).

The screening process

By Michael Mason

RICHARD ROUD (Editor):
Cinema: A Critical Dictionary
Two volumes, 1,121pp. Secker and Warburg. £25 the set.
0 436 42830 X

If you buy a two-volume work running to over 1,100 pages, called a "Dictionary" of X, you may reasonably expect that that will be that—especially if you have invested £25 in the process. This is the kind of purchase you hope will satisfy your need for information on X for some time to come. But £25 spent on the new *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* would soon have to be supplemented by, for example, £15 laid out on Leslie Halliwell's *Film Guide*, if you wanted to have even basic information about the cinema available on your shelves. This is a very oddly conceived work of reference—and, it may be inferred from various tokens, a painfully gestated one.

The would-be purchaser is admittedly given some early warnings. The retractions and qualifications start on the wrapper: "critical dictionary", "major film-makers". Then comes an introduction by the editor, Richard Roud, which undertakes to explain and justify the hybrid, non-lexicographical character of his dictionary. Even before this sets under way it is apparent that Roud has a brisk contempt for the dictionary as a curiosity-satisfying instrument.

The first sentence of his introduction runs: "An objective, scientific aura still surrounds the word 'dictionary', as it does the word 'encyclopaedia'". Still? It worth pondering here. How behind-hand we have been in realizing what "encyclopaedia" really means! Fancy using the word for so many centuries in a sense foisted upon it when it was coined!

It is a truism, of course, that dictionaries and encyclopaedias exhibit bias of various sorts. This does not prevent them from also being repositories of reliable fact. Halliwell's book proves the point. It is wildly opinionated but also—quite independently—an extremely serviceable work of reference. *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* seems to be based on the premise that if you cannot keep your opinions out you had better not let the facts in. A cinemagoer whose curiosity about Bertolucci had been aroused by the new *La Luna* (and who had bought the *Critical Dictionary* despite the warning signals) would surely be dismayed by the opening of the Bertolucci entry:

> The Francis Bacon painting that introduced *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) can be taken as emblematic not only of that film but of Bernardo Bertolucci's work as a whole. As with Bacon portraits, the coherence of Bertolucci's films arises from their exploration of its lack, from their consistent sense of dislocation and incompleteness. . . .

This is written by Robin Wood, a fine critic with consistently interesting views. But this is all that is on offer in the Bertolucci item: Wood's views in their most sublimed. No list of the films, no systematic information about their personnel, subject or technical character.

Even more frustrating for the user of this book will be the many passages in which the critical tone lies not too high but too low. Roud himself adds a comment on such entry, and some expectation is raised in the blurb that the job of informational bailing will be done, at this point: "Richard Roud's own comments . . . are . . . in each case underpinned by a selective bibliography". Sometimes the bibliography is selective to the point of not occurring at all. Instead, these contributions by the editor involve a good deal of simple-minded critical ranking: Roud thinks a particular film is the "best" by such-and-such a director, as opposed to his contributor who thinks it "among his worst" or vice versa. The reader is not likely to be grateful for these echoes of the chat which can usually be heard at less expense outside the doors of a cinema around eleven pm. Too much in this book is gossipy, and embarrassingly ephemeral in idiom and interest. For example, Roud on Sam Peckinpah: "the *mucho* sensibility has not been getting a good press lately").

The other big restriction is expressed in the book's subtitle: "The major film-makers". Most of the dictionary's entries (and they are consequently rather long and few) concern directors. This is not because of any dogmatism about "*auteur* theory": indeed, theory is very effectively set aside in Roud's introduction, and the case for thinking of the director as normally a good point of entry into a film is made with an adequate recognition of exceptions. Some oddities nevertheless flow from this editorial policy: an entry on Roger Corman which says little about his work as a producer and backer; an entry on Charles Laughton which deals only with *The Night of the Hunter*, Laughton may not have made *The Private Life of Henry VIII* or *Rembrandt*, but to whom else should the character of these films be primarily attributed? By the logic of the book, neither film is mentioned. Conversely, many lesser films do get mentioned because their directors are on doubtful grounds thought to deserve such an entry—directors such as Dick Lester, Sam Fuller, Polonsky, Don Siegel, and George Stevens. But then again, the better films of these men are not assured of a mention.

Roud isn't doctrinaire about the importance of directors. The idea is nevertheless raised above the level of an empirical generalization to the status of something like a law in his introduction, and deliberately made the organizing principle of the text which follows. In other words, this dictionary reflects the obsession with having a "methodological position" which has spoiled most serious film critics these days.

It has been responsible for a great deal of muddled solemnity. Only a film criticism, perhaps, would put "the critic's primary task" (a phrase in Roud's introduction): "Amid the earnest theoretical preambles from participants at film conferences are so much wasted breath, because there is not the slightest chance that different "positions" will be reconciled, or transcended, they will continue to think about films in the various ways they each happen, irrationally, to favour.

There are some signs that the editor himself may not be satisfied with the *Critical Dictionary*, or at least that the project didn't go exactly according to plan. The grumbles a little about contributors who were "not very good at meeting dead-lines", and the work has obviously been subject to long delays. Many of the entries give the impression of having been submitted about ten years ago, and are updated in perfunctory last paragraph, or, in the editor's comment (as in the case of Gavin Millar's piece on Olmi). The idea of a comprehensive reference work on cinema combining plenty of critical discussion in addition to basic information is a good one, but it has still to be realized.

viewpoint

ROBERT WISTRICH

The recent death of Rudi Dutschke symbolized the passing of an era for those of us who took part in the student campaigns against institutional bureaucracy and authoritarianism in 1968. Dutschke, the most popular leader of the German movement, expressed one important part of that upheaval, a commitment to critical Marxism, tempered in his case by the Christian humanism he had absorbed in his youth. Yet looking back across the 1970s which buried so many illusory hopes of an alternative society, he appears as a curiously remote figure and the passions he aroused look like the last romantic protest of a generation on the road to domestication. What ever happened to leftism, to the "Extra-Parliamentary Opposition", to that revolutionary student protest which sought to create a *tabula rasa* for mankind by getting rid not only of capitalism but also of the traditional left-wing parties? What was the meaning of that year of the *gauchistes* when the mantle of "global revolution" passed across the Western world into the hands of a selfconscious and exhibitionist youth culture? Were we no more than idle children of affluence condemned to restage the revolutionary dramas of the past in terms, merely, of colourful slogans and rhetoric, or did our escapades point to some, as yet, unknowable seed-plot of the future?

There were two polarities in my experience of 1968—the heady excitement of the May events in Paris and the cold shower of the August days in Prague. As a spectator, witness, and indirectly a participant, I got from these events an instant education in politics. They were, I think, pivotal experiences for our generation. The most striking feature of the May events, superficially at least, was their festive character. When I arrived in Paris the atmosphere was still charged with that promise of *fraternité* born in the night of the barricades amid clouds of acrid tear-gas discharged by de Gaulle's riot police; the walls and statues of the Sorbonne were plastered with posters of Marx, Lenin, Che and Mao, with situationist slogans and Red Flags; the courtyard was filled with artists, musicians, booksellers and political activists selling their wares. It was a time, however fleeting, when imagination took power and it was "forbidden to forbid". In the élan of the moment, everything seemed possible or rather, as the slogan had it, "Be realistic, demand the impossible!"; *changer la vie*, the will to change life was there, and had even taken priority over the will to change the world.

What seemed attractive about the *gauchistes* was their advocacy of free creativity, of a play-oriented civilization in place of the productive, materialist order with its compartmentalization and hierarchical relationships. For the leftists, as opposed to the more orthodox Marxist-Leninist groups, the proliferation of small, autonomous groups without precise structures fighting to liberate humanity from the "spectacular society" was to be the poetry of the future. An end to alienated consumption, to mere survival ensured by the Welfare State, *la plage sous les pavés*!

Yet somehow the serious critique that the movement represented was buried under a mythology which confused "red bases" at the Sorbonne with the October days in Petrograd or with an older tradition going back to the Commune, to 1848 or even 1789. The movement was seduced into storming imaginary Bastilles and it began to fetishize its own slogans. It was carried away by its very success in achieving that mass mobilization which brought ten million workers out on strike and temporarily paralysed the most authoritarian state in Western Europe. But there was to be no instant proletarian revolution on the streets—the Communist Party and the trade unions saw to that.

To pass from Paris to Prague in that stormy year was like watching a film run backwards to the opening reel. For the Czech students the traditional liberties of speech, the press and assembly which they had enjoyed since the Prague Spring were not a "bourgeois" façade but a precious acquisition which had been wrung from their neo-Stalinist rulers. Their problem was to move beyond communism, not capitalism. For them the opposition of Western radicals to alienated consumption and the affluent society sounded hollow and trite. The people had experienced twenty years of socialized means of production and what did they have to show for it? More exploitation, not less, and a painful decline in living standards.

Not surprisingly, when Rudi Dutschke came to Prague and lectured the students on the dangers of "liberalization" and the need to deepen "socialist democracy", they were unimpressed. In Prague all talk of "smashing the system" and of taking one's desires for reality, wrapped up in fashionable modes of Western Marxism, sounded like nihilistic self-indulgence. They were not interested in any revolutions by proxy—whether in the name of the Western proletariat, of Vietnam, Mao Tse-tung, Che Guevara or Herbert Marcuse.

Those August days in Prague before the Soviet invasion were a sobering reminder of the limits of spontaneity and of the real gulf between East and West. Educated under the Stalinist terror, the Czechs *knew* the dark face of socialist "utopias" and the repressive role of ideology from direct experience. It was beyond them how students in the West could look to Peking, Hanoi or Cuba as the Mecca of revolutionary truth. How could we compare the "repressive tolerance" of Western society with the real intolerance and repression of Soviet-style communism? It was a point which in the 1970s gradually dawned on the more thoughtful and sensitive of the student leaders in the West, including Rudi Dutschke.

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Excluders and usurpers

By Michael Mann

FRANK PARKIN:
Marxism and Class Theory
A Bourgeois Critique
229pp. Tavistock. £6.95.
0 422 76790 5

"Contemporary Marxism", begins Frank Parkin,

> is exclusively academic. Diligent bands of scholars are now combing through the pages of *Theories of Surplus Value* in search of social reality. As if to secure its newly-won respectability, professorial Marxism has, in the manner of all exclusive bodies, conducted its discourse in language not readily accessible to the uninstructed. Certainly no one could accuse the Marxist professoriate of spreading the kind of ideas likely to cause a stampede to the barricades or the picket lines.

The opening passage of Parkin's *Marxism and Class Theory: a Bourgeois Critique* is savage, sarcastic and beautifully constructed, and the quality is maintained throughout the book. Professorial Marxism (the label will probably stick) is pilloried, mercilessly and wittily.

Many of Parkin's targets are traditional ones. Marxist class theory argues that ethnic, national and religious community conflicts do not have the force or depth of class conflict. As Parkin laconically comments, "Clearly, the inhabitants of Harlem and the Bogside have not been informed of this". The theory ignores, except when it deplores, sectional trade unionism and forms of job protection seemingly turned more against other workers than against capital. It stubbornly adheres to property as the key to class relations even though "this is no longer a sufficient explanation in the West and totally irrelevant east of the Iron Curtain. Political considerations least you to ignore the social structure of the Soviet Union which, of course, provides many refutations of the theory's own premises. Its harping on hegemony, ideological state apparatuses, and false consciousness as reasons for the lack of revolution offers "a diagnosis implying in the most oblique and scholarly manner that the proletariat was suffering from a kind of collective brain damage".

The charge common to all these criticisms is that professorial Marxism has lost its hold on reality, and deals in abstractions that have no meaning for social actors. Typical of Parkin's jibes is one against "contradictory class locations" which, "as with so many of the widely advertised contradictions of capitalism, seem to be especially glaring in the immaculate realm of theoretical construction but noticeably less troublesome to those being theorized about". The current applicability of such a theory is negligible and the culminating sally is to note the "The Marxist science of predicting the past".

All this seems true in two senses. It is in altogether justified attack on the majority of those who style themselves Marxists and write about class theory. And secondly, it identifies correctly those issues which provide difficulties even for the more gifted minority of Marxists who do not deal simply in wilful, patronizing, jargonizing obscurantism and who recognize the need to deepen "socialist democracy", they were unimpressed. In Prague all talk of "smashing the system" and of taking one's desires for reality, wrapped up in fashionable modes of Western Marxism, sounded like nihilistic self-indulgence. They were not interested in any revolutions by proxy—whether in the name of the Western proletariat, of Vietnam, Mao Tse-tung, Che Guevara or Herbert Marcuse.

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here. The theories Parkin is dismissing offer an ultimate determinism of social classes in terms of the productive process or the division of labour: but "mode of collective action" offers no such determinism, being merely a descriptive categorization.

Thus Parkin can be outflanked. The reader might say, "Your model is illuminating and I will use it in my analysis *after* I have shown how forms of closure are determined by the productive process (or the division of labour)". This would be to admit the importance of all those forms of conflict traditionally ignored by Marxists, but it does not rule out the attempt to explain them by reference to the Marxist's master-concepts, whereby nations, races and sexes become entwined in the productive process or division of labour. Now I believe, as Parkin obviously does, that this model is finally unconvincing, that the master-concepts become too strained. The "division of labour between the sexes" is not what we have traditionally understood by the term "division of labour". National and racial stratifications, though undoubtedly "material", involve a consideration of the relationships between societies totally extraneous to Marx's theories (or to those of any other major nineteenth-century theorist). A genuine theory of these types of stratification and social classes must first recognize the autonomy of the sexual and inter-national dimensions of social life before charting their principal inter-relations. On the other hand, it is somewhat cavalier to discuss these issues without taking seriously the contributions made by the more gifted Marxists—by Otto Bauer, Perry Anderson or Arghiri Emmanuel for example. And it is scarcely credible that Parkin should ignore totally the voluminous writings of the Marxist feminists (even if he does regard that literature as unsatisfactory) while at the same time accusing Marxists of neglecting sexual stratification. Parkin's book engages with none of these views.

But I must not end on a negative note. The book's faults are those of polemic and satire. If Parkin had been in a generous mood he would not have provided us with such entertainment.

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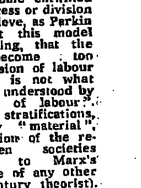

commentary

The orchestration of comedy

By Christopher Wintle

The Italian Straw Hat and
Zémire et Azor
Collegiate Theatre

It was in the late nineteenth century—and especially with figures such as the Viennese musicologist Guido Adler—that the arguments for conserving the minor works in music history won the day: contrary to the reverence of the previous generation for the mystique of genius, they insisted that the music of the Parnassians presupposed a supporting pyramid of lesser figures on lower steps, whose work we have to know if we are to preserve a sense of proportion. This last point has been very effectively demonstrated this year at the Collegiate Theatre, first with the revival of Gazzaniga's *Don Giovanni*, written in the year before Mozart's and evidently a major source for it, and more recently with the staging of operas by Rota and Grétry. For various reasons, all of these works have been worth hearing once, though whether any of them would repay further visits is another matter.

Nino Rota is best known in this country as the composer of the post-war Italian Cinema and, true to this reputation, the opening bars of *Italian Straw Hat* (1946) are so redolent of the assured breeziness of vintage comedy that one actually misses the crackle of the sound track. But apart from his collaborations with Fellini, Visconti and Antonioni, Rota has been a prolific composer in other media—chamber music especially—and, rather surprisingly perhaps, a musician of some learning, having written in the 1930s a thesis on the Renaissance theorist Zarlino.

Operatic farce—certainly as presented here—is a curious genre. Not only do the impeccable timing and vertiginous pace of the stage action have to be taken over and sustained by the orchestra, but some equivalent also has to be found for the patternings of verbal repartee which, even with their sexual innuendoes, inevitably lose something of their edge when they are set to music. In translating (with his mother) the classic Labiche/Marc-Michel text of 1851 into a viable libretto, Rota solved the problems by replacing the verbal thrust and parry with an elaborate network of both overt and veiled allusions to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century operatic repertoire (especially Mozart, Verdi and Rossini). In itself, of course, the use of parody and quotation in opera is far from new. But in another sense it is a way out of the problem, as farce effectively becomes satire; and if, even on these new terms of reference, it is going to work, the quotations not only have to be apt and witty, but also need to contribute to some fairly clearly discernible narrative stance on the part of the composer.

Rota's score goes some way to overcoming these problems. He is able to sustain very effectively the unusual expanse of fast music (which in this buoyant performance by the New Opera Company was nicely paced by the conductor James Judd), and the allusions are skilfully integrated into the general flow of things. But eventually his satire is urbane rather than cutting, and in the softening of focus some important distinctions become blurred. In the first act, for example, there is very little stylistic differentiation between the overt sentimentality of Fadinard's picture song, the burlesqued duet of bride and groom, and the perky, too glibly self-satisfied concerted materials. There is a lack, too, of real sharpness in the instrumentation, whose comic associations are consistently over-obvious. Rota is none of the tart subtleties (notably here or in his harmony) of a kind Weill, nor can he achieve those poignant moments of comic grace that Britten effected in *Albert Herring* (a piece by no means dissimilar) through being able to stand back a little further from his material.

Despite this, however, the work makes for a fluent evening, and the company so evidently enjoyed that one can only hope that it will lead to other revivals of pre-war Italian opera—especially, perhaps, of some Perrussi.

It would not, on the other hand, be quite accurate to describe Grétry's *Zémire et Azor* as a revival, when the work has received three stagings in England alone during the last fifty years. In fact, Grétry (1741-1813) wrote over sixty operas, though this is one of only four or five that have survived. That it has done so is due perhaps to the particularly sympathetic relationship between his restrained but lightly tinting style, and the interesting blend of late eighteenth-century concerns in Marmontel's libretto: there is a Persian (*Arabian Nights*) setting, plenty of magic sound, apparitions and transportations, and an archetypal fairy-story of how Beauty's love for the Beast breaks a spell and restores him to human form. Its conventions, furthermore, and conventionalized modelling of them through the comic scenes, are nicely understood (though it also shares an eighteenth-century tendency to funk its most challenging moments).

Grétry's style eludes simple definition. Roccoco more than elegiac Romantic, Italian in its ease of melody, French in its clarity and limited scale, it works entirely within the opéra-comique mould, and throws up a number of touching little arias—the most poignant of which is undoubtedly Zémire's awakening and call to Azor shortly before his restoration (a passage beautifully staged in Anthony Besch's stylish production with the Phoenix Opera). The Beecham performing version, however, has perhaps outlived its usefulness: its varnish of re-orchestration no longer clarifies, but confuses the tone of several numbers, and there is no opportunity to assess the traditional critical concern for the leanness of Grétry's textures. But here, too, it would be nice to think that this might lead on to a staging of such other of his successful works as *Le Tableau Parlant* or *Richard*.

Jules Pascin: left, a detail from "Study of four women" (watercolour); right, "Le dîner 1928" (brush ink). Both are on show in an exhibition of Pascin's work at the Theo Waddington Gallery, 25 Cork St, W1, until April 26.

Too much nudity, not enough crudity

By F. W. J. Hemmings

Thérèse Raquin
BBC TV

There is a theory that *Thérèse Raquin* was originally planned as a play. At the time, the young Zola had dreams of writing a series of hits for the boulevard theatres. Like Dumas *fils* before him, he would make his name with a dramatized version of one of his own novels: *Thérèse Raquin* was to be his *Dame aux Camélias*. Five years after the book was published, he set about turning it into a play. It was the most successful of all the dramatic works he ever composed, though it gave him nothing like the celebrity he was hoping for: Zola's gifts did not extend to rewriting for the stage what he wrote for the armchair reader.

But if it is true that he planned *Thérèse Raquin* with the footlights in mind, this might partly explain why it lends itself so well to transposition into another medium. Philip Mackie's three-part television adaptation sticks much more closely to the novel than Zola himself did in his own dramatized version.

That so little in the details needed to be changed, so little added and so little removed, would have given him a pleasurable sense of justification. He might have been a little surprised that the tubby cat Françoise, instead of being grabbed from Mme Raquin's lap and smashed against a wall by Laurent, was shown fondled by Thérèse and snatched away from her protecting arms; but to judge from the interview she gave Sean Rossiter, printed in the *Radio Times* the week the serial started, Kate Nelligan saw the cat as a kind of surrogate for Thérèse: "she is the cat and the cat is her"; well, it is an interesting idea. He would have noticed the big part given to Laurent's painter friend, anonymous in the book but now given a name, Vidal; but on reflection he would have realized the necessity to provide Laurent with a confidant to whom he could impart a few, at least, of the secret thoughts that Zola was able to convey to us in the long passages of "analysis" which cling his pages here and there. What would have surprised him most would perhaps have been the meticulously detailed morgue sequence; here the producer boldly dispensed with the veil he later drew over the more horrific scenes in the conjugal chamber, when Thérèse and Laurent, trying to make love, sense the clammy, disintegrating corpse of Camille, inserting itself between their bodies.

In those days the morgue was, as Zola says, a free spectacle open to anyone; he describes, and we are shown, pensioners, shop-girls, ladies of fashion and even urchins off the streets, pressing up against the plate-glass windows that separated them from the naked cadavers. Whether, as a matter of historical fact, these were displayed in so absolute a state of nudity as we were shown in the television version is a little doubtful. This was, after all, just the time when Nieuwerkerke, Minister of Fine Arts, was causing all the neoclassical statues on public view in Paris to be equipped, where necessary, with fig-leaves.

What would Zola have thought, finally, of these late twentieth-century incarnations of his mid-nineteenth-century fictional characters? Brian Cox was Laurent, for a time looking, in fact, exactly like Castelli's engraving for the first illustrated edition of the novel, but more probably modelled on the stalwart, bewhiskered boatmen in Renoir's "Déjeuner des canotiers" (or maybe simply copied from a portrait of Maupassant). If, on the other hand, one looks at Castelli's illustration of Mme Raquin—hunched, mean-mouthed, spiteful-looking—it becomes apparent how very differently the producer saw this character: Mona Washbourne, with her refined accents and gentle smile, was a long way from the ferocious egotist, the middle-aged female spider that Zola imagined.

And her son Camille, whether as a living man or a phantasmal apparition, was again nothing like the Camille of the book, the weedy, sickly, thin-haired, scrofulous clerk with his piping voice and flesh which, as Thérèse said, had about as much elasticity as putty. Kenneth Cranham was just too good-looking and, so even more, was Kate Nelligan herself. However marvellously she managed the abrupt transitions from apathetic "daughter of the house" to frenziedly ardent adulteress in the first part, and however competently she contrived the false smarts, the tightly sardonic taunting of Laurent in the last, there was nothing she could do about her dewy, translucent beauty, her regal bearing, the haunting witchery of her voice. She was just too impressive for the part: what was Lady Macbeth doing on her hands and knees, brushing the carpet? The point about Thérèse is that she was not beautiful: Laurent says as much, and admits that he took her just to economize the expense of a kept mistress. One needed some *folie à deux*, a younger Anna Massey perhaps, to convince us that a loathsome clothed in human flesh could be a soulless, hetero-humaine.

commentary

A new young Edmund Kean

By Martin Dodsworth

Hamlet
Royal Court

The Royal Court programme has Claudius first in the cast list, so you know at once that something is up. First place properly belongs to Hamlet, or, if the order is that of appearance, to Barnardo. Before you have time to reason this out, the stage comes alive. It is a rather handsome set, a box of panelled wood, doors and lattices, a trompe-l'oeil courtier gazing steadfastly through a half-open door, and up front a line of buckless choir-stalls with a throne in the middle. Courtiers enter slowly, seat themselves and stare into space until Claudius arrives: "Though yet of Hamlet . . ." Richard Eyre, the director, has simply docked the play of its opening scene.

He had to, because the point of this production is that it is *Hamlet* without the Ghost; not at all Shakespeare's idea, of course, but magnificently put across by Jonathan Pryce, a pale, gangling, lantern-jawed and hollow-eyed prince, the perfect mismatch to a solidly robust Claudius. At first, things don't go too well; the court-scene drags without the eerie prologue on the ramparts; Laertes is unpromising, Ophelia has a little-girl squeak of a voice and Polonius rattles through his advice to his son as though embarrassed by the lines. Then comes the scene where Hamlet meets the Ghost.

A brilliant light shines on Hamlet from the back of the stalls as, fighting off his companions, he advances toward the edge of the stage, which you might well take to be the cliff that beetles o'er his base into the sea. Suddenly, the prince crumples up in awful groans and retchings: you think he is going to be sick. Indistinctly from this nausea Hamlet's father is heard speaking to him from the pit of his own stomach. Hamlet is a man possessed; or mad; or, Lainglandy, both. Pryce's performance has a terrible authenticity about it, and in the intimate space of the Royal Court the effect is electrifying. It remains so throughout the evening.

His Hamlet is very mad. Three moments stand out—first, his sudden, indecent attack on Ophelia at the end of the nunnery scene, gross, physical and disgusted; second, the wild dance with the woman-tumbler at the end of "The Mousetrap", quite berserk; and third, his thrusting his father's picture, in a hand red with the blood of Polonius, into the face of a blubbering, whimpering, groaning and still vainly pretty Gertrude.

Pryce's performance has star quality. Haydon wrote of "the furious impulses of Kean, who cannot point out when they come or why, but is an organ for Nature, when she takes it in her head to play on him"; Pryce has just this openness, power and conviction. Nor does he play on one note only. "They complain Kean is insipid in his soliloquies!" wrote Haydon after seeing *Hamlet*; "At *these times* in *Nature* would he soliloquize, & how would he do it? Would he rant? Would he stamp? Would he thunder? Oh no he would reason quietly. . . . Was not this, then, the progress, the system, of Kean?" It is certainly Pryce's, who speaks "To be or not to be" in a quiet, rapid near-monotone, sitting in a line with Ophelia as she pretends to read, his eyes glazed.

It may not be Shakespeare, but it is gripping. And, of course, it is Shakespeare in part. It is not for nothing that father and son have the same name. And "His shirt the only weares, Much like mad-*Hamlet*" wrote Antony Scoloker in 1604, plainly with Shakespeare's version in mind. But in the Royal Court the madness is plainly Oedipal in origin; Hamlet has to stay at Elsinore because his mother cannot bear to see him go. In Shakespeare, on the other hand, the madness is ambiguous; there are not many places where he could be certified on the strength of the text alone.

Shakespeare most clearly suggests that Hamlet is mad when, at the end of the play, he talks about divine interest in his affairs ("even in that was heaven ordinant" and so on), but the point, oddly, is thrown away in this production. The second half of the evening goes at a reduced rate altogether, largely because nothing can hold our attention with equal force once Pryce is off-stage. Harriet Walter is good as Ophelia in her madness, but Simon Chandler has an impossible task with a tourful boy of a Laertes. Michel Elphick's Claudius doesn't get much beyond finding life at Elsinore too much of a handful. Hamlet therefore returns to the stage early—the opening of V.2. Hamlet's own account of his escape, is transferred to the place where Horatio normally gets his letter. Despite Pryce's marvellous timing, this does not put all quite to rights, since this Hamlet's madness is only set off by women, and the flash and fire are much reduced when Ophelia is dead.

What is missing, and it matters, is any sense of the aristocratic. Fortinbras exclaims to find "so many princes at a shot" dispatched, but in Sloane Square they don't go much on princes. Pryce is a droll, quick-witted, uncomfortable ex-public-schoolboy, and his mother, with becoming cuffs and toques and the consciousness of Jill Bennett's remarkable profile, is very Home Counties, like Claudius, the self-made man whose affairs don't stand too much looking into.

In this ambience it does not make much sense to worry about nobility—"O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown" has to be spoken in quotation marks, like a party piece, as though Ophelia were already mad. Similarly, "honour" is an idea grown mysterious; hence the soliloquy on Fortinbras's venture for his "little patch of ground" wants point. Hamlet's admiration for Laertes, "a very noble youth", disappears, and Laertes himself turns into a little boy. Along with all this go the philosophical and metaphysical questions to which the play gives rise. What there is that might make sense of Hamlet to himself and what sort of God might interest himself in the doings at Elsinore are matters firmly put to one side at the Royal Court.

Ernest Jones thought that there was so much in Hamlet that you could not expect any actor to show more than an aspect of the whole. The same applies to the play of which Hamlet is a part and to its director. Richard Eyre's production is in many ways an impoverishment of the Shakespearean original, but it is certainly an adornment of the stage. You do not see young Edmund Kean in full flower every night. An enthralling experience.

A gentle collision with Hollywood

By Michael Mason

The Killing of a Chinese Bookie
Electric Cinema/Little Bit Ritzy

Throughout the last part of John Cassavetes's *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (made in 1976 and now—for the first time in Britain—on limited release) the hero is nursing a gunwound received in the central action of the film. We only realize how serious it is in the closing shot, as he stands on a slide-walk in Los Angeles trying to wipe from his hand the blood that has flowed from his side. There must be dozens of Hollywood films in which this motif is used. Versions of it occur in *Key Largo*, *Double Indemnity*, and *The Killing*. It crops up fairly recognizably in another recent non-Hollywood film that has important affinities with the new Cassavetes work and much surpasses it: Wim Wenders's *The American Friend*.

Cassavetes's hero, Cosmo Vitelli (played by Ben Gazzara), doesn't do any of the things which the traditional wounded hero is meant to do, however. He doesn't flee or dictate his confession. Instead he engages in a series of incoherent confrontations with various other characters on matters in no way related to his wound or his immediate predicament (he is being pursued by the myrmidons of a gambling racket). In other words, Vitelli is that familiar creature, Cassavetes-man, at his most fully blown. Cassavetes has said that he always reserves the most thoroughgoing application of his well-known improvisational method for the ends of his films. He writes a rough script covering about three quarters of their length, but leaves the last part to be determined in the light of the actors' accumulated sense of their roles.

So Cassavetes and Hollywood collide with even greater velocity than usual at the end of this new film. It is a collision which has been solicited all along by the director. More than any of his previous films, *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* resembles, or at least invokes the idea of, a film that could be made by the big institutions which Cassavetes so distrusts—with the intention of making the viewer thoroughly aware of how opposed Cassavetes and Hollywood really are. The plot is in fact rather like that of a good recent piece of Hollywood: Karel Reisz's *The Gambler*. Vitelli, the owner of a strip-club with artistic pretensions, undertakes to murder a Chinese underworld magnate as a means of clearing the $23,000 he owes in gambling debts to some Los Angeles gangsters. He succeeds in the murder and, at least up to the time of the enigmatic ending, has evaded an attempt by the sponsors to eliminate him, too.

The violent scenes are deliberately damped down in the cameravork and editing, and subordinated to other occasionally comic interests. (Entering the Chinaman's well-guarded house turns out to be easier than getting there on the freeway. The stolen car with which Vitelli is elaborately provided bursts a tyre, and he has to make his way to a garage to telephone for a taxi.) The context of Vitelli's life, his club, adds anti-sex to anti-violence, because a lot of very attractive flesh is on display with remarkably unexciting results. This is an exploitation film turned on its head.

Which is, honourably, part of the explanation of the film's procedure, and makes it more interesting than if, as some French critics have urged, Cassavetes is simply trying to subvert the "codes" of Hollywood narrative indiscriminately. As the director himself has said: "I've never seen anyone go and blow somebody's head off. So why should I make films about them?". It follows, however, that another kind of interest is generally substituted which may well set the viewer's teeth on edge. It's all wrong that people shoot each other, according to Cassavetes—instead, "what we are saying is so gentle". *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie*, like all his films, loves its personnel too much. Time and again, the camera fondly dwells on the gangsters' faces like a senile woman stroking an unamiable tomcat.

The gentle approach also gives rise to the familiar, interesting, exasperating Cassavetes way of handling plot. Vitelli's past, his present motivation (he apparently changes his mind about doing the murder), and his future remain mysterious, as if it would be indelicate, or a violation of his privacy, to investigate these matters. Those who know Cassavetes's previous work will be familiar with the oddly suffocating feeling that arises from the combination of this uncertainty about character with the overwhelming proportion of close-ups of faces in the shooting. Vitelli's club is another irritating enigma. We are not allowed to stand back from it visually or judgmentally—to make up our minds about its spatial arrangement or the quality of its entertainments. And there is a mystery about the mechanisms behind the latter: who invents the routines? how spontaneous are they? With an effort, one could locate a sophisticated comment on "performance" here. More plausibly, it is Cassavetes—as in his earlier *Opening Night*—maintaining niceness towards his personnel to the point where he won't even tell them, as actors, to stop thinking about impersonation and start doing it.

Technically, also, the film is both interesting and tiresome. Tiresome in its ratio of close-ups, interesting in this resistance to the orthodox reverse-angle way of shooting dialogue. Tiresome when the camera hoses back and forth to prove that both speakers are in front of the lens at the same time. This is a documentary technique, and is undoubtedly meant to impart verisimilitude. Here the directorial gentleness becomes not just irksome, but also slightly false. A truly loving camera would just sit in front of Ben Gazzara and the others, and soak up their features. Instead, Cassavetes is constantly trying for the *appearance* of cinematic fidelity (an important point of difference between him and a much better director who shares some of his aims: Robert Altman). Very commonly there is some out-of-focus, foreground obstacle to a clear sight of a face (and, aurally, environmental noises keep drowning speech).

There is a feeling of displacement of attention for its own sake in this film, undermining the claimed concern for the figures. Which may have to do with the philosophy of gentleness. After all, people do occasionally "blow somebody's head off" (and have fights, and even sexual intercourse) and to allude to these things in a film while declining to get them before the camera (which Altman, again, freely does) is to risk seeming tricky and shallow.

Forthcoming literary events include the Lancaster Literature Festival from May 17 to 24. The full programme includes some unexpected juxtapositions: John Updike with Ivor Cutler; Michael Holroyd with Craig Raine; a performance of a play by David Edgar called *Wreckers*, with the poet Elizabeth Jennings. Sessions are planned on SF, Ireland, the North and Women. (Any Northern woman writer of SF prepared to dash off a yarn set in Ireland would clearly scoop the workshop events.) Further details from the Festival Office, St. Leonard's House, St. Leonardsgate, Lancaster.

J.T.

to the editor

W. H. Auden

Sir,—To resolve the ambiguity which Charles Osborne apparently sees in my letter (March 14): Auden did not at any time in my life "entice me into his bed". Osborne's whole phrase would be equally untrue were the adjective to be omitted.

Mr Osborne now quotes (astonishingly without either him or you asking my permission to do so) a private letter I wrote to him after reading the American edition of his book, in which I had said that whilst repudiating his erroneous allegation "for the record" I did not then consider it worth publicly denying. But at that time I had only read his book in a cursory way. I had omitted to read the Preface, in which he fulsomely thanks me above all others for sharing memories of Auden with him, thus certainly giving readers the impression that I had approved his assertions about myself, when in fact they had never been shown to me before publication.

Having read his letter (March 28) I now doubt whether I should have used the word "scrupulous" in connection with his book, which however I continue to find informative. Therefore his promised second edition, with errors corrected, will be welcome.

STEPHEN SPENDER.

Kinnell Ward, Royal Free Hospital, Pond St, London, NW3.

Sir,—My God, what does Charles Osborne want? The man seems to think others are to blame for his mistakes, and that anyone who tried to rescue him from some of his blunders is precluded from stating an opinion on his completed book. A. Mr Osborne reports in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* (March 14), he didn't intend to devote very much time or effort to his book. It seems late in the day for him to complain that other people didn't do enough to ease his labours. My first quick reading of his MS revealed some fifty errors; further samplings have revealed more. I corrected what I could in the time available, but the errors of tone and emphasis were so pervasive that one could not fix them without throwing out the whole book and writing a new one on his behalf. Other writers—Humphrey Carpenter, Charlos Miller, M. J. Sidnell—were already at work in the field, and the effort required to set Mr Osborne right scarcely seemed justified in view of the brief interval that could be expected before his book was supplanted by better and more careful ones. I tried to point to him in my letters, but he might have guessed that one would not have asked him to be restrained in his acknowledgments if he had not written a book from which one preferred to keep one's distance.

Mr Osborne aside, may I take the opportunity to make clear the position of the Auden Estate on the matter of biographies? Auden's Will says nothing about this subject: I believe the omission to be deliberate. Elsewhere he said he hoped "to make a biography impossible", and he asked his friends to destroy his letters—"when they are finished with them". But when he stated in print that "As a rule I am opposed to biographies of writers", he almost always qualified the rule with his exceptions. In the case of Trollope he wrote that the exception was justified because Trollope had written an autobiography which "leaves out a great deal": because he was not simply a writer but, "as an employee of the Post Office", "a man of action"; because he was a world traveller; and, finally, because he was "a very eccentric character". As all these reasons apply to Auden himself (he called *A Certain World* "a sort of autobiography" and worked for a time at the Post Office film unit) his rule was flexible indeed. There can be little doubt (for he stated it mostly in the hope of persuading readers not to pulverize his work as the product of his private life, but rather as the product of a great literary and moral intelligence. As for his letters, he consistently allowed these to be quoted by virtually any scholar who asked permission.

Auden did not give his executors much ground to stand on if they wished to block the way of a biographer. And I doubt there is very much moral or legal justification for preventing a book from being written about a dead man. For these reasons I am happy to read any manuscript study of Auden and to offer suggestions that seem appropriate; it will be clear to everyone but Mr Osborne that courtesy does not imply endorsement. That the first biography of Auden should be, by its author's own admission, hasty, derivative and superficial is an unfortunate accident. What is especially unfortunate about so superficial a portrait is that Auden tended to keep his virtues and his generosity hidden from gossipmongers and newspapers. The more thorough and accurate a biography, the more honour it will do to his memory.

EDWARD MENDELSON.

Literary Executor of the Estate of W. H. Auden. Department of English, Columbia University, New York NY 10027.

Kenneth Allott

Sir,—The point of my letter (March 14) about Donald Davie on Kenneth Allott was only to show the literary-critical or literary-biographical unwisdom, which is so common, of assertion without evidence (see Letters, March 28). I was wrong, though, when I wrote that the letter to me in which Kenneth Allott reviewed his life and work so sadly and so quietly was written "nearly 20 years ago". In fact it was written on July 30, 1965. The "glum portrait" (of which I gave only a few details) was his, not mine.

GEOFFREY GRIGSON.

Broad Town Farmhouse, Broad Town, Swindon, Wiltshire.

'Northanger Abbey'

Sir,—Mr Brogan (Letters, February 8) quotes six lines of a poem from the diary of the Rev Nathaniel R. Snowden and asks for the identification of their author, the last line of the poem being mentioned in Chapter 4 of *Northanger Abbey*.

In my copy of the Dover reprint of Bickham's *Universal Penman* (1743) I noticed on page 34 (contained in Part VIII, issued separately in 1734) the first two and last two lines engraved in copperplate:

Quickly lay hold on time, while the
Be careful well to Husband ev'ry
Hour.
Despair of Nothing which you
Unweary'd Diligence your point
will gain.

The question is: where did Bickham get the quotation from? I have looked through the works of Waller, Dorsham, Prior, Addison and John Baucks (1701-51) who appear in the volume and could conceivably have written the lines, but despite the unwearied diligence enjoined by the unknown author I have failed to gain my point.

The fact that the origin of these words has remained a mystery so long suggests that they may not have first appeared in an ordinary printed book, and that the solution is to be found in one of the many copy-books that preceded Bickham. Bickham in his introduction refers to the fact "that there is already extant a large variety of copy books and several of them executed by very accurate and able penmen". Is it not, I ask, a case of one copy-book copying another?

Surely, now, we know Jane Austen's source for the words. Almost certainly, she must have been familiar with the quotation from childhood when she was required to copy it either from Bickham; or, more probably, from a later copy-book containing similar material. The way the line is introduced in the novel, "We are told . . .", suggests a schoolroom origin for it, and, surely, the almost contemptuous handling of it—equating Mrs Allen's vacuous behaviour with unwearied diligence—suggests an old saw from the nursery.

H. L. SARTIN.

23 Newton Avenue, Farringdon Park, Preston.

Jean Wilson's *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, in the series "Studies in Elizabethan and Renaissance Culture", is to be published by D. S. Brewer on June 12, at £10.

'The Stained Glass of Oxfordshire'

Sir,—I was delighted to see your cordial review of Peter Newton's *The Stained Glass of Oxfordshire* (March 21). Your reviewer would have liked more of the plates in colour. So should we. And yet he feels the book should be cheaper. I wish it were, I can only assure him and your readers that neither author nor publisher make anything at this price. But if we do not have a price reflecting the cost of production and distribution our ability to publish scholarly works—and we publish quite a number—will cease. If your reviewer can show us how to pay a bigger printer's bill with less money we shall, along with all other learned societies, be eternally grateful.

JOHN CARSWELL.

The British Academy, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0NS.

Letters from Elizabeth Bishop

Sir,—I was surprised to read in "Letters from Elizabeth Bishop" (March 7) Anne Stevenson's statement that: "To my sorrow, most of the letters Elizabeth Bishop wrote to me during the 1960s (all of them badly typed on thin yellow paper) disappeared from my files in Glasgow when I moved to Dundee in 1974". For the past five years these Bishop letters, and the Marianne Moore letter, have been a part of this institution's well known, and widely used, Modern Literature Collection. The letters were purchased in November 1974 from a highly respected London bookseller. The acquisition was reported in the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collection* (U.S. Library of Congress, 1977) as part of accession MS 76-851. In addition to inclusion in this standard reference, information about the letters and other Bishop material held has been provided to a number of researchers.

Ms Stevenson states that the quotations are taken from "xeroxes" of the original letters. It should be clearly understood that Ms Stevenson's photocopies were not made by this Library. In accordance with accepted practice this Library does not make photocopies of manuscript material in its collections without the permission of the holder of the literary rights.

HOLLY HALL.

Rare Books and Special Collections, Washington University Libraries, St Louis, Missouri 63130.

'Evidence and Assurance'

Sir,—Perhaps a word in reply to L. Jonathan Cohen will help to keep up the fruitful tension between sceptics and their opponents to which he referred in his review of my *Evidence and Assurance* (March 14).

He finds it implausible to claim that in their philosophical moments people are liable to want something—radical assurance—that is often unattainable. For it is "paradoxical to suppose that a philosopher, with all his supposed talent for intellectual self-control and living the examined life . . . should persist in wanting radical assurance about the core of his belief-system after . . . some perspicacious colleague has shown assurance to be utterly unattainable . . . there are many things a wise man might think it valuable to have (such as a method of squaring the circle) but nevertheless schools himself not to want since they are impossible for him to get".

The charge of paradox rests I think on an equivocation between "philosopher" in the sense of man who considers philosophical questions and "philosopher" as stoic sage. From the fact that someone is liable to want something if he considers certain philosophical questions, it does not follow that he would be rational to want it if he were committed to eradicating his unsatisfiable desires, or that he would continue to want it if he had succeeded in their eradication. As it happens, I think I probably don't on the whole share Mr Cohen's views about the ideal relations between "I get what I like" and "I like what I get." But even if I am wrong not to, I can still be right about what a man is liable to want if he reflects philosophically about his belief-system as a whole. I am in any case unconvinced that the actual practice of stoicism is as easy, in the case of radical assurance, as Mr Cohen, by his circle-squaring analogy, seems to suggest. No doubt one won't go on wanting to have a method of squaring the circle after having been convinced that there is a proof that this is impossible to possess. But isn't this simply because one would have been equally happy to have *either* a method *or* a proof that there is no method? It isn't as if the progress of technology has been crippled by this particular lack. And if the want is disjunctive anyway, you won't even need a "school" yourself out of it, when somebody tells you that there cannot be a method. The reasons for wanting radical assurance are by contrast not just reasons for wanting one or other of radical assurance and a proof that it is often unattainable.

N. M. L. NATHAN.

63 Caernarvon Road, Norwich

'A Sour Apple Tree'

Sir,—L. C. Knights (in his lecture "Poetry and 'things hard for thought'", February 29) says of Blake's "A Poison Tree", "it could be developed into a novel".

John Blackburn has produced that novel in this *A Sour Apple Tree*.

STEPHEN H. POPE.

123 Evans Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6S 3V9.

Among this week's contributors

JOHN BAYLEY is Warton Professor of English at the University of Oxford.

ANNE BORN's translation of poems by the Faroese poet, William Heinesen, *Arctis*, will be published this year by Thule Press.

HUGH BROGAN is the author of *Abraham Lincoln*, 1974.

RICHARD BROWN is the co-editor of *The James Joyce Broadsheet*.

PAUL CARTLEDGE is the author of *Sparta and Lakonia*, 1979.

WENDY COPE's pamphlet of poems, *Across the City*, will be published shortly by Priapus Press.

VALENTINE CUNNINGRAM is the author of *Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian Novel*, 1975.

MARTIN DODSWORTH is a lecturer in English at the Royal Holloway College.

F. W. J. HEMMINGS is the author of *The Life and Times of Emile Zola*, 1977.

DAVID HOLDCROFT is the author of *Words and Deeds*, 1978.

DORIS LANGLEY MOORE is the author of *Lord Byron—Accounts Rendered*, 1974, and *Ada, Countess of Lovelace*, 1977.

J. R. LUCAS's *On Justice* has just been published.

MICHAEL MANN's most recent book (with R. M. Blackburn) is *The Working Class in the Labour Market*, 1979.

MICHAEL MASON is Lecturer in English at University College London.

PAUL NEEDHAM is Curator of Printed Books and Bindings at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

JULIAN ROBERTS is Keeper of Printed Books at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

PAT ROGERS's most recent book is a biography of Henry Fielding, 1979.

DAVID SKED is a Lecturer in English and American Literature at the University of Liverpool.

PAUL SMITH is Professor of Modern History at the University of Southampton.

STUART SUTHERLAND is the author of *Breakdown*, 1976.

PHILIP THODY is Professor of French at the University of Leeds.

A. N. WILSON's new novel, *The Healing Art*, is to be published shortly.

ROBERT WISTRICH is the author of *Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky*.

CHRISTOPHER WINTOUR is a Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths' College.

Author, Author

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than Friday, April 25. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that the most nearly correct in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to The Editor, The Times Literary Supplement, PO Box No 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, and marked "Author, Author" on the envelope. The solution and result will appear in our issue of May 2.

Competition No 17

1 Had dancers' skirts on their
Horses' gaskins;
Crash Pete Shounce with that
girl of Dowser's
Drove a horse that was wearing
trousers;
The wagonette from the Old
Pier Head
Drove to the tune "My
Monkey's Dead".
Scavenger barons and your
jackal vassals,
Your pimping press-gang, your
unclean vessels,
We'll make you swallow your
words at a gulp
And turn you back to your
element, pulp.
Don't bluster, Bimbo, it won't
do you any good;
We can be much ruder and
we're learning to shoot.

2 Madame très honorée, Puisque
pendant que je me trouve chez
vous, il faut passer vous les
plusieurs heures dans une
tude profonde, dites moi, s'il
voulez que je vogue a plein
don, ou que je me contienne
des bornes proscrites . . . Si
vous semble mieux que je
demeure dans un certain
exécutant, vous supplie de m'
nécessité de me contondre
m'ôtant le pouvoir de sortir
vous voulez que je sois, Ce
vous ne cônèrea pas que je
de tourner le clef dans la
deux fois par jour.
—Sadjuet Johnson, Letter
Thrale, 1

3 "Winking & blinking,
"Winking & blinking,
"Winking & blinking,
"Like Doctor Johnson
—William Blake, *An Island in the Moon*, Chapter 3

4 "I say—dash! ask Anthony, an Anthem!" said Sucion.
"Lo the bat with Leathern wing,
drunk—I say—dash! ask Anthony, an Anthem!"

Result of Competition No 13

Winner: Dr Graham Nicholls, 2 Trent Valley Cottages, Lichfield, Staffordshire.

Answers: 1 "I say, this evening we'll all get

The first Académicienne

By George Steiner

MARGUERITE YOURCENAR:
La Couronne et la lyre
Paris: Gallimard.

When she enters the French Academy, sword or quill on hip, Marguerite Yourcenar will have high shadows at her back: Mme de Staël, George Sand, the Comtesse de Noailles (to whom Proust kept fervently prophesying this consecration), Colette and, above all, Marie Curie, barred from candidacy even after two Nobel Prizes. Paris is thick with more or less apocryphal accounts of how Mme Yourcenar's apotheosis was managed. The Protector of the Academy, M Giscard d'Estaing, is known to have been very active. His minister of justice, himself an Académician, saw to it that Mme Yourcenar, Brussels-born and, since 1939, an American citizen based, primarily, on a solitary island off the Maine shore, regained her French nationality just in time for the election. Nor was the latter anything like the unanimous gesture hoped for in august liberal quarters. Twenty votes to twelve. "It is", as one of the most unctuous of "immortals" was heard to remark on leaving the conclave, "the will of God."

In which case, the Deity has shown an ingenious but by no means obvious preference. Simone de Beauvoir, stern Minerva of letters, had let it be known that she would have no part in the Quai de Conti carrousel. Told of Yourcenar's election, she responded that it was "a non-event". This, however, is an exaggeration. Though certain masters of literature and of thought have spurned its advances—Gide and Sartre among the moderns—the Académie does, since 1635, incarnate that willed centrality of letters and of culture, of the honour to the language and of the complex balance between Christian and radical values, which suit French sensibility. The election of a woman, opening the way as it now has to the possible candidacies of Mesdames Nathalie Sarraute, Zoë Oldenbourg or Jacqueline de Romilly, is an event. But why Marguerite Yourcenar *en première*?

Wicked tongues hint at the masculinity of her *oeuvre*, at her age (she was born in 1903), at the likelihood that she may not be a very assiduous visitor to Paris. Supporters, on the contrary, emphasize the statuesque composure of her style, the patrician aparteness of her career, comparable, perhaps, to that of Vigny. And there is the undoubted fact that both the academic-critical world and that of official power and public consensus have come to see in *Les Mémoires d'Hadrien* one of the few classic achievements in post-war French and, for that matter, European fiction. Published in 1951, this feigned autobiography of the stoic and ailing Roman emperor does take a lasting place between the over-wrought shimmer of *Marius the Epicurean* (Mme Yourcenar must have been thoroughly familiar with Pater) and the more robust virtues of *I Claudius*. It is a flawlessly written text, capturing with ironic solitude the sense of moral limitation, of a very late afternoon in politics and culture, which now characterizes European sentiment. It should retain its rank as a "small classic", a most difficult genre to carry off, among the works, comparable in register, of Benjamin Constant, of Fromentin and, in its more special vein, of Valéry's *M. Teste*.

Nothing else in Mme Yourcenar's output is of quite this stature. *L'Oeuvre au noir*, which won the Prix Fémina in 1968, is her most substantial historical novel. It narrates the hunted life and the death at the stake of a sixteenth-century alchemist. In the figure of *Zénon*, as in that of Hadrian, Mme Yourcenar argues her vision of essential human solitude, of the radical incapacity of human beings, particularly and paradoxically when they are most self-conscious and articulate, to communicate to others, to those they love best, the final quality or truth of their convictions. This, indeed, is the Yourcenar leitmotif. We find it in *La Nouvelle Eurydice* of 1931 and in *Le Mystère d'Alceste* which appeared in 1965. Following closely on Rilke, Mme Yourcenar seeks to dramatize the fathomless disappointment in man's love, in the seemingly inevitable egotism of this love, which lies at the heart of Eurydice's return to the dead and of Alcestis' sacrifice and ambiguous resurrection. That homoerotic love may, possibly, reach deeper and achieve more selfless concordance is, of course, a notion implicit in the person of Mme Yourcenar's Hadrian and of the poets whom she has translated or commented on (Cafavy, Hortense Flexner, etc).

This bias is to be felt, again, in her latest publication. *La Couronne et la lyre* is an anthology of Greek verse chosen, translated and lightly annotated by Mme Yourcenar. It extends from Homeric, Hesiodic and early Ionian fragments all the way to Byzantine-Christian epigrams of the ninth century. Thus there are examples of epic, lyric, dramatic, tagdary, epigrammatic and didactic verse across some 1200 years of Greek literature and language. Very many derive from the *Greek Anthology* on which Mme Yourcenar had already drawn when rendering the epigrams of Hadrian. Homer is represented by single lines, Hesiod by two brief passages, the Antigone-Creon encounter stands on its own, Diogenes Laertius is the source for the verse-extracts from Plato and even Aristotle. Theocritus' famous second Idyll is given *in extenso*. But there are, as well, numerous more esoteric *bonnes-bouches* reflecting the anthologist's taste for the elegiac and the discreetly pathetic. Theodoridas, Bianor, Honestus of Byzantium—not household names—are poignantly represented. Nonnos, of fourth and fifth-century Panopolis, emerges as an intriguing figure of transition between antique and medieval prosody. Zonas of Sardis' epitaph for a young child keeps its muted magic.

This is not, nay was meant to be, a book for scholars. Mme Yourcenar loftily ignores modern philological and critical work (she believes, for instance, that Aeschylus' *Suppliants* is an archaic, early play). What is more damaging is the bland uniformity of idiom which she adopts for all her translations. The strident ferocity of Cassandra comes out as suavely as the lament of Euripides' Iphigenia; Archilochus' mordant, polemic squibs are as smoothly turned as the sugar-floss of Musaeus. Throughout, we find the pallid and mundane register of late nineteenth, early twentieth-century French neo-classicism against which Péguy so vehemently protested. The models for Mme Yourcenar's cadence are Renan and Maurice de Guérin, whose incomplete *Centaure* seems to be the abiding *fons et origo* of suggestion across the whole of her work. It is this smooth monotone which will make this copious anthology highly misleading to anyone looking for a genuine reflection of the great range of Greek and Hellenistic poetry.

Abel Bonnard's war-time selection and translation of ancient Greek verse remains, in every essential respect, a much finer performance. It may well be that Bonnard's unwelcome shade—he was expelled from the Académie in 1945 for his services to the Vichy régime—will how, with just a touch of malice, to Marguerite Yourcenar, the most historically innovative of his successors (one can no longer use the hallowed term, *confrères*) as she mounts the famous staircase, between sabres drawn, to her place *sous la Coupole*.

The male as Other

By Philip Thody

CLAUDE FRANCIS and FERNANDE GONTIER:
Les écrits de Simone de Beauvoir
614pp. Paris: Gallimard.

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR:
Quand prime le spirituel
249pp. Paris: Gallimard.

There are few women writers that the conservative and phallocratic male finds it easier to be furious about than Simone de Beauvoir. I can call her "la grande Sartreuse" or "la Sartreuse de Flore" and underline the contradiction whereby the leading French apostle for women's life derived all her ideas from a man. I can point to the countries in which she and Sartre hoped to find democratic socialism—Russia, China, Cuba, Algeria—and observe how regularly their indefatigable optimism has been disappointed. I can underline how absurdly utopian she is in proposing to abolish the family, and comment that it till befits a woman who has chosen never to have children of her own to be quite so dogmatic about how other people should bring up their progeny. I can mention ostentatiously at the inordinate length of the books she has given me to read and draw the attention of my fellow reactionaries to her apparently total lack of humour.

For the first few pages of *Les écrits de Simone de Beauvoir*, I thought that Claude Francis and Fernande Gontier were going to confirm all my worst prejudices. By deciding to be a witness to her time", they write, "by making an account of the struggles of her time, Simone de Beauvoir has composed, through her Mémoires, her essays, her novels, her articles and prefaces, all complementing and throwing light on one another—a work which, by the variety of its themes, blending from philosophy to daily life, by its personal considerations, is comparable to the Essays of Montaigne". With admirers like this, she needs hostile critics? And a writer is capable of being so passionately hostile as she is to be undoubtedly but notorious enough in an enthusiastic supporter of the English middle class, refrain from encouraging his allies to pour scorn upon a woman so obviously given to emasculate us?

But when you look at how her work has developed, Simone de Beauvoir sails through these flip, if not facile objections like a triumphant dreadnought through a flotilla of week-end yachts. And she does so for one very good reason: because she found, in the women's liberation movement, the ideal cause in which the social, psychological and ethical implications of Sartrean existentialism could express themselves to perfection. "On ne naît pas femme, on le devient". No sentence better expressed the Sartrean view that we are not defined by our biology but by our culture. And no approach to the problem of sexual equality more effectively invited women to look critically at the social conditioning which the male half of the human race—that archetypal, tyrannical Other—had imposed upon them.

The most fruitful insights of Sartrean existentialism have indeed always been in the area of human relationship, rather than in politics, in the analysis of how the kind of person we have freely chosen to be affects the way in which other people see us, rather than in the views which *Les Temps Modernes* has put forward about Communism or the nature of European society. The women's liberation movement, with its insistence on the desire of women to be responsible for themselves and thus to change their traditional relationship with men, is both the most extensive and the—so far—most effective example of a social group re-defining itself in accordance with the concept of freedom set out in Sartre's philosophy.

It thus comes as no surprise to be reminded, in one of the extracts from *La Force des Choses* reprinted in *Les écrits de Simone de Beauvoir*, that she has always acknowledged Sartre as the "ideologically creative" member of the partnership. For although she has never fallen into the bad faith of refusing to accept responsibility for her actions or ideas, she has never claimed to be an original thinker, and there is something rather attractively and paradoxically Sartrean about the way in which she has taken the ideas developed by a man and used them to make women more conscious of their freedom. In July 1972, the interview which she had given to *Le Nouvel Observateur* on "la femme révoltée" was reprinted in *Marie Claire* with the title of "The radicalization of Simone de Beauvoir", and it is one of the merits of the work which Francis and Gontier have done in providing details of her evolution as a writer that it makes clear how this radicalization, with its increasing admiration and respect.

It is also a virtue of *Les écrits de Simone de Beauvoir* that it enables you to understand why she feels such a dislike for the French bourgeoisie, especially for the male of the species. The legislation introduced by Napoleon in 1802 has only just begun to lose its effect on the way women have to live their day-to-day lives, and it is useful to be reminded of how hard French women have had to struggle for such elementary rights as opening a bank account of their own without their husband's written permission. The supposedly irresistible Latin male also showed himself in peculiarly obnoxious colours in the comments which his literary representatives made about Simone de Beauvoir when *Le deuxième sexe* was published, and it is a salutary reminder of the realities of sexual life in France to discover that, in 1973, only 7 per cent of French women used contraceptives. The fault, as Simone de Beauvoir makes clear, lies with the male-dominated attitudes of French middle-class society, and for once one can see why French intellectuals used the word "bourgeois" only in a derogatory sense.

This lack of enthusiasm for the class in which she was born is evident from the very first texts that Simone de Beauvoir wrote, and the first publication of *Quand prime le spiritual*, the novel that she composed between 1935 and 1936, gives a fascinating insight into the atmosphere in which she was brought up and began her career. It is a collection of five short stories, loosely connected by the recurrence of the same characters at different stages in their development, and set against a background of Parisian and provincial life in the inter-war period. The title is a deliberately ironic echo of Jacques Maritain's *Primauté du spirituel*, and points to the obviously didactic nature of the volume: Human beings, and especially women, are for the early Simone de Beauvoir wholly alienated from their true interests by the influence on their education and upbringing by a misguided idealism and the attitude to sex recommended by the Roman Catholic Church.

It is an unexceptionable thesis, and one which the novels of François Mauriac illustrate rather more vividly if less intentionally. It is also a theme which is quite fully developed in the first volume of Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography, *Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée*, and there are a number of other similarities which make *Quand prime le spiritual* more interesting for the student of her work than for the reader coming to her books for the first time. The great tragedy of Simone de Beauvoir's youth, the death of her friend Zaza, is very clearly transposed into the section of *Quand prime le spiritual* entitled "Anne", and it is obvious that the rejected manuscript of her first novel was very much to hand when she decided, some twenty years later, to describe her own rather innocent adventures in the 1920s' night-life of Montparnasse.

De profundis

By John Sturrock

NATHALIE SARRAUTE:
L'Usage de la parole
157pp. Paris: Gallimard

It is said that Nathalie Sarraute writes her books in the enviable tradition of Paris, sitting at a café table. There she will be able to net her raw material on the wing, and to treasure its inspiration what others might see as a wasteful distraction. For her subject, in *L'Usage de la parole*, is once more the disarming banality of the words people speak to one another when they meet, and the anarchy of those fugitive, subterranean impulses which remain a tacit accompaniment to all conversation.

This is a delectably austere, bendy-eyed book, short and with no word-play on the cover to say that it is fiction. *Roman* it is not, *récits* hardly; but fiction yes, and, as always with Mme Sarraute, of the rarest, most moral kind. There are ten brief sections, each with its own epigraph of some commonplace phrase or group of words.

The first of these is in German, "Ich sterbe", the German for "I am dying" and the last words spoken by Chekhov on his deathbed at Badenweiler, the spa to which he had despairingly gone for the sake of his health. They have the pathos of all recorded last words, but made poignant by the fact that for Chekhov they were a literal alleviation of his thoughts, since he spoke them in German not his native Russian. From this Sarraute argues, touchingly, to the dramatist's heroic modesty *in extremis*, but it is rather the harrowing discrepancy between the bare form of words—as if he were trying out to compilate a verb not easily used in the first person singular—and the foreknowledge they contain of his own approaching extinction, which gives Chekhov's historical "Ich sterbe" its rightful precedence in *L'Usage de la parole*. It is a sombre, humane opening to what is elsewhere a mordant and unforgiving book.

The phrases which give rise to the remaining nine scenes or episodes are French ones: "A très bientôt", "Et pourquoi pas?", "Ton père, Ta soeur", and so on, ordinary enough until Sarraute imagines for them a context which turns them from bland civilities into weapons of psychological warfare. Friends meet and converse, in a café or in the street, and are all sociability except underneath, where the best of friends can at moments be the most savage of opponents. Sarraute resorts sardonically to metaphor to indicate what words will not capture: the shameful and ineffable attributes that constantly imperil our urbanity.

This is a party-game for grown-ups; to allow the imagination to play around the vacuous and paltry remarks which daily meet the ear. It is a game which Sarraute invites her readers, ironically, to play with her; for the otherwise random scenes of *L'Usage de la parole* are unified by the artful commentary of a narrator, asking for our trust and forbearance as each scene opens, and ultimately for our cooperation, since the scenes are meant as specimens, as objects-lessons in the interpretation of human motives. Sarraute's are micro-dramas of evasiveness and anxious conformism, of our will to live by the prevailing rules and also to see our friends as consoling alter egos. Each variation on what is really the one scene records a profound, disorientating intrusion by one person on another, a violation of the superficialities we live by. The two speakers have roles, never names, because the fateful anonymity of language is both a refuge and a curse, it makes conversation at once easier and less authentic.

Sarraute has no equal at imagining the form of these secret contests. The final chapter of *L'Usage de la parole* can stand for them all. The tell-tale words here are "Je ne comprends pas". Do we dare to say this to someone when we do not in fact understand what they are saying to us? Or do we acquiesce in our own mystification, out of cowardice, friendliness, or the fear of being thought stupid? (A pointed question always in Paris, and never more so than in these days of rampant Lacanery.) Sarraute's lay-figures meet; one spouts nonsense to the other and, wonder of wonders, is interrupted by the aggressive admission, "Je ne comprends pas". A saving caution, one might hope, and Sarraute's final bleak gloss on the human race? Of course not, she has twists in store. The spouter of nonsense is delighted with the other's rightful precedence in *L'Usage de la parole*. It is a sombre, humane opening to what is elsewhere a mordant and unforgiving book.

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L'Usage de la parole is a tough, wholly pleasurable book.

The Golden Hind at the Golden Gate

By D. B. Quinn

WARREN L. HANNA :
Lost Harbor : The Controversy over Drake's California Anchorage
459pp. University of California Press. £9.50.
0 520 03785 5

There is something in the air, it might appear, that excites Californians to extremes. Its native people greeted the first white men they had seen with such extravagance that they recorded it with wonder and not a little alarm. "The common sort of people leaving the King, and his Garde with our Generall, scattered themselves together with their sacrifices among our people, taking a diligent view of every person : and such as pleased their fancie, (which were the yongest), they inclosing them about offred their sacrifices vnto them with lamentable weeping, scratching, and tearing the flesh from their faces with their nailes, whereof issued abundance of blood"—thus Francis Drake and his men were greeted in the summer of 1579, according to the "Famous Voyage" narrative printed by Hakluyt a decade later.

There has been something comparable with this extravagance in the attention with which modern Californians have attacked their early history and, not perhaps wholly surprisingly, the visit of Francis Drake. Some of this texture perhaps to the fact that the Californian historians of most vigour and ingenuity have been enthusiastic amateurs rather than professionals. Bancroft, Sutro, Wagner were only precursors of the present-day Powers, Akers, Newhams and, the author of this attractive book, Warren L. Hanna, which reviews the more recent attempts to pin down the place where Drake's men were received and where they stayed, repairing and recirculating the *Golden Hind* and rescuing her men for her long voyage across the unknown Pacific.

In the absence of a detailed log and with indications which are, to say the least, ambiguous, the Drake materials lend themselves to controversy. That it should have raged with some force in recent years has been due to the very natural desire of the proponents of successive theories to have a sure place which could be designated for the extensive celebrations which marked the quatercentenary of the formal annexation of Nova Albion to the English crown.

This failed in one sense and succeeded in another. A opaque recording the event, and dedicated by the Bishop of London, was eventually placed on what had long been known as Drake's Bay, but at a site on that Bay which no contending party can maintain to have been the site; while at the same time other less official monuments have appeared to decorate sites which have substantial followings.

In 1974 the California Historical Society tried to evoke a consensus : it selected the three most favoured sites, one on Drake's Bay up the so-called Drake's Estero, one at Bolinas Lagoon, a little to the south of the Bay, and a third inside San Francisco Bay (Tiburon Point and San Quentin Cove), and set up a series of questions to be asked of spokesmen for these three sites, Raymond Aker, V. Aubrey Neasham and Robert H. Power, who all expounded their view of the evidence, which pointed, each thought, exclusively to their chosen sites. The result was the almost inevitable mixture of serious argument and special pleading which such an inquiry was bound to provoke.

Mr Hanna, lawyer-enthusiast for Drake, and a more sceptical devotee of the Drake landing cult, resolved to examine the arguments put forward in 1974, and subsequently, with a degree of legal impartiality. In this well-produced book he gives a good introduction to the sources and then gets down to the specific issues brought out by the protagonists in the debate. One bombshell had dropped on what was regarded by some as a crucial find, the celebrated "Plate of Brass", allegedly that left nailed to a post by Drake in June 1579, annexing the territory to the English crown. Found in 1937 near the San Quentin Cove site, it has been a sheet anchor in arguments for that site (even if claims that it had earlier been found near Drake's Bay, and then thrown away as useless where it was found in 1937, continued to be pressed if not established). After the 1974 discussions this plate, reposing in the Bancroft Library (with historical backing from the late Herbert Bolton and a scientific laboratory), was subjected, under the auspices of the current director, James D. Hart, to further scientific and literary examination. His report *The Plate of Brass Examined* (1977), citing metallurgical opinions from Oxford, MIT and Berkeley, came down heavily on the plate being composed of modern brass and therefore a fake. This was roundly rejected by Power but in a supplementary report (in 1979 (which appeared too late for Hanna), Dr Hart added additional material, all pointing against the genuineness of the Plate. It can, most students concede, now be removed from the controversy unless some quite spectacular rebutting evidence can be brought forward.

In his scrutiny of the data adduced in the 1974 discussion, Hanna also eliminates as wholly unproven arguments based on an inset, "Portus Novae Albionis", claiming to show the anchorage of the *Golden Hind*, published about 1595 by Jodocus Hondius in a world map, which had been used by each protagonist for his own purposes as primary topographical evidence for a particular site. Power has continued to employ it however as a sheer anchor for his San Quentin Cove theory, Hanna's quasi-judicial appraisal not being adequate for him. Akers, representing the Drake Navigators' Guild, has attempted to pile up evidence, good, bad and indifferent, in favour of the Estero inlet into Drake's Bay already referred to. Hanna brushes a good deal of this evidence aside also, but he gradually segregates a number of arguments or documentary items in which he sees some degree of validity, in each of the cases of the three protagonists. This forms the meat of the book.

Hanna would make a good judge but, like many judges, some of the judgments he has to make are not of a very decisive kind. There was of a very decisive kind. There was a long argument over the length of the tails of the animals (gophers or ground squirrels) described by Drake's men which may strike the outsider as mainly humorous, and may well invite the natural scientist to smile when he discovers that all the to-do takes no account of where such creatures lived in 1579, since the arguments are about where they live in 1979; yet here Hanna makes a decision in favour of the ground-squirrel protagonist, Power, and awards him some credit for the San Francisco site on this account.

To select one such issue is not perhaps fair but it demonstrates both the value and the limitations of a judicial approach to a set of historical arguments. It is limited to the data presented, not to the data which may be relevant to a decision. Seventeen chapters are devoted to the specific arguments presented by the three partisans. Chapter 29 sums the issues up.

The anthropologist, the late Robert F. Heizer, at least established (and archaeological work has confirmed) that all three sites lie within the territory occupied by the Coast Miwok people in the early modern period, so no serious controversy over latitudes appeared (since around 38° N could fit any one of the three). The white cliffs Drake saw, Hanna thinks, were viewed before Drake entered the harbour and so he votes here for San Francisco Bay (my own plain reading of the text would contradict him on this) ; as far as watering, victualling and suitability for careening construction are concerned he again decides for the San Francisco Bay site but with less certainty. On the hinterland he comes down, not decisively, for the Estero ; but on the fauna he puts the San Francisco Bay claim on top. The departure for the Farallones gives, in his view, the San Francisco Bay site a slight advantage.

For each of the six issues (out of seventeen discussed) that he considers relevant to judicial assessment he awards points on a scale of three, Drake's Estero making up eleven, Bolinas Lagoon four, San Quentin Cove in San Francisco Bay nine. It could not be said that the end result is in any way decisive — a case for appeal perhaps ? But the book is well put together ; it is lucid and interesting ; it has a good deal to say about the Drake sources as well as about the site-focused arguments about them, and it makes the discussions clear to those who are unfamiliar with the controversy. It has much to be said for it as a way of dealing with comparable historical puzzles.

Earlier interest in the magnificent stretch of coast encompassed by Point Reyes and Drake's Bay led to the building up of an extensive National Park there : if the Drake controversy did nothing else, it did preserve this area from spoliation. To non-Californians a number of things stand out. The first, of course, is that this is only one tiny aspect of a world-encompassing voyage of exceptional interest and that the amount of time and temper, not to mention money, spent on a single local issue might seem wholly disproportionate (though perhaps not if the reader is familiar with other aspects of California).

The second is that the purely contemporary historical data are not capable of providing any final solution. A third is that to argue as if there were no significant effects of shore erosion or earth-movement (much of the area is west of the San Andreas fault and part of it shifted appreciably in 1906), climatic changes or flora-fauna distribution alterations keeps much of the topic at a pre-scientific level of discourse, though later study of such subjects (some has already begun) is likely to add negatives rather than positives to the patterns of evidence.

Hanna is inclined to believe, and the reader is very likely to agree, that only additional documentary or archaeological evidence could provide a final solution. But is this what Californians want? Drake-hunting is a game they like to play. Finality would bring it to an end as Hanna admits. This book, with its long bibliography, suggests that the continuing search, not this historical reality, may still be the thing. But he has enabled us to see clearly the pieces which have hitherto been played.

Pioneers behind the wheel

By Hugh Brogan

WARREN JAMES BELASCO :
Americans on the Road
From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945
212pp. MIT Press. $14.95.
0 262 02123 4

Human beings do not deserve their cars. We have turned these elegant machines, or such fun, into instruments of death, maiming, economic destruction, ugliness and disease. Worse, the deterioration was implicit in their very creation. They were invented by fallen man for his fallen world. They express not only his need for freedom and discovery, but his will to speed, his craving for power. The benefits they have brought are perhaps now overbalanced by the drawbacks. So it must be with wistful regret that we look back to the innocent world Warren James Belasco so charmingly evokes in his earlier pages : the world where, for example, as one of his illustrations shows, it was a real triumph of will and courage to have brought your delicate Toledo car to the rim of the Grand Canyon and so naturally you had to have yourself photographed, enthroned above the landscape. Nowadays, according to Daniel Boorstin, you are likely to be found inside your Chevrolet, ignoring the view, looking instead at slides of it.

Mr. Belasco's picture of how the earliest American motorists took to the road as modern gypsies, "tin-can tourists" (a term later disgraced) rejoicing in their flivvers, rejoicing, too, at their escape, not just from the soft comforts of modern domesticity, but from the discomforts of Victorian railroads and hotels, is much the most beguiling part of his book ; nevertheless it is perhaps the least important. In his introduction he tells us that he is a historian who delights in studying process ; and his book is suffused with a sense of rapid social change. In his original idea of studying what Americans did with their cars, rather than what cars did to Americans (in the way of pollution and traffic-jams) he has found a most rewarding theme, one which illuminates many of the most important forces in modern American life and makes us look again at commonplace things, such as the motel. That he manages to discuss the latter without once referring to *Lolita* or to *Psycho* shows what a secure grip he has on his subject. He does not need smart cultural references to impress his readers.

He does not profess to tell the whole tale of Americans and their automobiles : he sticks to models, not to shopping centres, to the open road, not to city streets. But this is not a serious restriction. He is able to show how the increasing prosperity of upper and middle-class Americans prompted their warm welcome of the car : here was the perfect investment by which they might escape the stiff routine of their lives.

The car made it possible, or so they thought, to recapture the freedom of the pioneer and to emulate Thoreau at 29 cents a gallon ; to breathe fresh air, see their country, and avoid the perplexities of tipping railroad and hotel staff. Their natural love of gadgetry spilt over from the car itself to the camping equipment that went with it. For a few blissful years before 1917 there was an air of paradisal adventure about motoring. Even the austere priestess of etiquette, Emily Post, went on a transcontinental trip, with her son for chauffeur. He was not altogether satisfactory.

At Erie, for instance, he throws in the clutch, "Cleveland ?" he asks, and snap! nothing can make him look to the left or the right of the road in front of him.

"Oh look! There is the house where President Garfield—"

Zip! we have passed it.

"Wait a minute, let me see that inscription—"

We are half a mile beyond!

And perhaps, at her journey's end, Mrs Post felt like another lady on her arrival at a hotel in San Francisco :

"... the beds, the beautiful white soft beds ! And the sheets ! And white blankets that haven't got bits of grass sticking to them. And the lovely closet and oh, the bathroom and a bathtub ! And there's hot water and you can use all of it you want. Isn't it beautiful ? Isn't it exquisite ? Isn't it the most beautiful thing you ever saw ?

All the same, like many others, she wrote a book praising her experience. It was no preaching, no demanding, so democratic ; and it made it so nice to get home.

Yet there was a fundamental inconsistency in these motorists' attitudes. The fact that they welcomed the chance to meet the other half when which half they themselves belonged to ; and when the other half took to the road in greater and greater numbers (often simply because it was the cheapest way of getting a holiday and seeing relations) the elite drew back. They had not fled *nouveaux riches* in smart hotels to mingle with *nouveaux indigents* (migrant agricultural workers, for instance) at insanitary camp sites ; and much though they liked the challenge of life in the open, it grew a shade too exciting when Indian boys threw stones at their tents or suddenly flooding stream washed them away. The claims of comfort and security were too strong to resist, and in the quest to satisfy them the model was born. Private enterprise took up the lucrative business of providing motor travellers with comfortable beds, quiet nights, restaurant meals, baths, showers, flush toilets ; and after some ups and downs (wholesale building in the 1920s was followed by slow recovery in the 1930s) and much necessary experimentation, carried out mostly by energetic "Ma-and-Pa" small enterprises, the great post-war boom guaranteed both supply and demand. The time was ripe for big business ; new, orange-roofed monuments arose in the land, a chain of Howard Johnson establishments, those glorious rebuffs to English motorway stations. From the primitive to the fully modern (colour television and a Widow Bible in every bedroom) was the work of little more than a generation. It is very stately for the crowning process of American history.

It also illustrates very well some of the processes by which American capitalism, technology created a new toy to meet a rising demand for pleasure-in-leisure. Railroads and hoteliers at first dismissed auto camping as a mere fad, as an establishment, businesses always do when confronted with something new. Then it became clear it was not a fad, but a fearfully effective competitor. There was nothing the railroads could do, but the hotel association systematically organized the motor camps, degraded the more primitive of the dirty places, and, when the work failed, turned to legislative aid, using their political influence to get the states to require camps to be licensed to "be fitted with a health standard" was applied, instead of driving the motor tourist out of business, this more generally made it easier for the hotels to appointed among them, to crush their weaker rivals and evolve the motels. In the end the hotels caught up, undermined by the Depression, as well as by the motor-car, and accepted that theirs would not again be an all-male, railroad-type business ; turned themselves to the provision of car-parks and other accommodation ; and even welcomed the motellers (if there is such a word) to their trade association. Meanwhile the pioneer drivers, whether as holidaymakers or as fugitives from the grasping wrath, found, everywhere, there was no more room. At last, the "nice people" had caught up with them, and in the countryside it all ; and in the countryside farmers were out with shotguns to prevent casual roadside camping. Who can deny that class conflict also one of the great themes of modern American history ?

Magazines

The sun is quiet. It is so dark
The women in their houses keep the lights on all day.
Light blue, dark blue their houses go,
Their heated germs unwinding.

They do not worry about water running out
In the fringes of their apple beds :
They are deep-sky observing with their eyecups, dewcaps,
Curved spiders, the software of cosmic time.

In the hall a bronze sculpture of Saturn,
Sunrise taken at the moon's straight wall,
Glossy blow-ups of a lunar earthrise,
A talkative Martian sunset :

While this week's star-atlas muscles
Charm in as Pluto's hanging-plant,
Scrapbooks pile with jetty slides,
The powder-room at the country-and-western dance.

Medbh McGuckian

Objectifying the subjective

By Andrzej Poltawski

KAROL WOJTYLA :
The Acting Person
Translated by Andrzej Potocki
367pp. Dordrecht : Reidel. £14.50.

This is the present Pope, Karol Wojtyla's, main philosophical work, in which he tries to give an outline of his philosophical anthropology. The point of departure is man as he is given to himself in and through his actions.

The author's position may be described as phenomenological realism. But this is not the realism criticized by Heidegger for introducing ready-made external things into the sense-bestowing human subjectivity ; nor does it embrace the tendency of the traditional, cosmological approach to regard man as a thing among other things in the universe. If Wojtyla accepts the traditional Aristotelian metaphysics in its general outline, he at the same time shows its inadequacy when applied to human subjectivity. What the traditional approach could not give was precisely a direct access to subjectivity. It is *nor*, therefore, the external point of view which he takes from tradition, but the vision of man as a dynamic unity. Being an organic unity acting in the world, man is in a sense objective in all his aspects. Nevertheless, according to Wojtyla, it is only the category of lived experience that makes possible the objectivation of human subjectivity and a genuine foundation of philosophical anthropology and ethics.

Consequently, we should not be deceived by the occurrence of traditional metaphysical terms (eg, *suppositum*) in the context of Wojtyla's considerations ; they serve only as a general delimitation of the place where the genuine phenomenological work has to begin—the work which, in fact, gives those terms a new meaning. The starting-point of the investigation is thus *exactly* opposite to that which is usual in school-discussions, where ready-made categories are simply taken for granted. Moreover, Wojtyla's acceptance of the realistic attitude is motivated by his own analyses, in which he shows that originally and fundamentally man experiences himself as acting, and that it is only this experience which can give an adequate understanding of man.

Thus, the famous disagreement between Locke and Hume concerning the existence of "a clear and distinct idea of active power, as we have from reflexion on the operations of our mind", decided by modern sensualism and transcendentalism against Locke, seems, on a more thorough examination, to be judged in his favour ; but it is precisely the activity of the integral man, not that of his mind, which is here being shown as given. In this perspective, human subjectivity, one of the main concerns of contemporary thought, appears not only as bestowing sense on things, but in the first place as the subject of actions and processes that take place *in* man ; and cognizing also is a real action or process.

Human consciousness, "mirroring" ourselves and the world in which we live and thus revealing to us, one might say, the scene on which we act, has another function also of subjectivation : it makes our image of the world, as well as our actions, *our own*. But consciousness itself does not give us the power invoked by Locke ; it is mirroring of the world is, on the contrary, a consequence of real acts of cognition. It is the whole man alone who acts and cognizes and who can develop and perfect himself (or deteriorate) on the strength of his action.

Conceived in this way, Wojtyla's philosophical anthropology opens the way to an objective treatment of moral values. The characteristics of right and wrong, applying in the first place to free human actions, qualify secondarily the acting person, who is made better or worse by his actions. In fact, Wojtyla wrote this book in order to understand better the foundation of ethics, which is his main concern in philosophy.

The original and rich analyses of experience, the gist of which I have tried to convey, constitute Part 1 of the work. The main problems treated are : the relation of consciousness to efficacy (ie, our experience of "being the agent" of our actions) and the distinction between two modes of human activity—the mode of something merely happening in us and, on the other hand, that of genuine free, responsible action. (It is interesting to note that these analyses, in their main features, if not in their vocabulary and point of departure, are parallel to the ideas expressed by the French psychiatrist Henri Ey in his book *La conscience*.) It is shown that efficacy demands a particular transcendence of the person towards his action, and Part 2 is devoted to an analysis of this transcendence ; while steering his actions, man at the same time shapes himself and, if his actions are right, fulfils himself. This needs—and brings—integration, and Part 3 describes this integration on its two levels, of the living body and the psyche. But the fulfilment of man seems, on examination, to be possible only if he cooperates, of his own accord, with other people and makes, so to speak, a gift of himself to others. This attitude, called by Wojtyla "participation", consists in a conscious acceptance of the common good and a striving to realize it. Part 4 of the book gives a sketch of this dimension of human existence (which is more fully developed in other works by Wojtyla).

If one wants really to understand what appears to some people as a surprising combination of conservatism and novelty in the teaching of Pope John Paul II, it is not enough to look at it from a pragmatical, sociological, political or other external point of view, or even from a purely theological one ; we should also take into account Karol Wojtyla's perfection philosophy of man — a philosophy which, although in harmony with his theological prolongations, has an independent foundation and is deeply rooted in the problematics of our time.

The actual shape of the present English text needs some explanation. Translated by Andrzej Potocki from the second Polish corrected and enlarged edition (not yet published), it was edited by A. T. Tymieniecka, who made many changes and rewrote some parts of the translation. The examination of these changes had only partly been made by the author before October 1978 ; it was subsequently passed by him to a committee of three people. However, the book was published before the results of this examination, as well as a great part of the translator's stylistic corrections, could reach the editor. And, while some sentences of the translation have been improved in the published version, some parts of the original have, unfortunately, been obscured and distorted. The editor often paraphrases the original loosely, occasionally introducing terms alien to the author's own vocabulary, like "constituting the object" and "noematic autopresentation" or "ideas". Moreover, the Latin term *suppositum*, which plays an important role in the original text, is rendered by a dozen or so different, sometimes very complicated phrases.

Naturalist of the numinous

By J. R. Lucas

ALISTER HARDY :
The Spiritual Nature of Man
A Study of Contemporary Religious Experience
162pp. Clarendon Press : Oxford University Press. £6.95.
0 19 824618 3

Sir Alister Hardy is a scientist who has always refused to confine science to the canons of accepted orthodoxy. Although acknowledging "that science itself can never deal with the real essence of religion, any more than it can with the nature of art or the poetry of human love", he maintains that the phenomenon of religious experience may become the subject of scientific inquiry, a part of the natural history of man. He approaches the subject as an observing naturalist. To ensure objectivity, he deals only with written accounts of religious experience, studied in sufficient number for them to be compared and contrasted with one another. To this end he set up the Religious Experience Research Unit at Manchester College, Oxford, and was its first director. During the first eight years a succession of appeals elicited several thousand first-hand reports of experiences. Questionnaires were sent to a group of students in Nottingham, and included in a nation-wide survey, and randomly selected members of the general public were interviewed.

In *The Spiritual Nature of Man* Sir Alister presents the results. There are chapters on research and quantitative studies by other members of the Unit, and introductory and concluding chapters on "Spiritual feeling in a scientific age" and "What is spirituality ?". The main part of the book, however, is devoted to selections from the first-hand reports of those who responded to the appeal. They are allowed to speak for themselves, and what comes over most strongly is their sincerity and authenticity. It is impossible to doubt that the experiences took place, and were more or less as described, and were of major importance in the lives of those who had them. The wide range of variation in the experiences is also remarkable. Some were visual, auditory, tactual or even olfactory ; many more were cognitive or affective, or were construed by the subject in terms of his relationship with other persons or institutions. In part this is due to the number of different senses the word "experience" has acquired. But it also reflects the complexity of our concept of religion. There are many ways in which a person may become aware "of a benevolent non-physical power which appears to be partly or wholly beyond, and far greater than, the individual self". It is a doubly negative definition (non-physical, wholly beyond), and different people may have different ideas of what constitutes the physical, and of the limitations of their own selves, and therefore of what must be ascribed to a non-physical power that is beyond them.

Sir Alister is cautious about the conclusions which can be drawn, or which he would like to draw, from the data he has collected. There is not much support for institutional religion, or for the "person *out there*" of traditional orthodoxy. Although he takes religion to be essentially concerned with a transcendent power, often he seems happier with an immanent power, psychologically real for those who experience it, but a phenomenon more akin to the phenomenon of mind than to any traditional idea of God. In the course of evolution man has developed spiritual needs and capacities much as he has intellectual skills and interests. Our feelings of dependence and awe, our need for love and support, our ability to rise above our ordinary limitations and do a thousand things we had never done before, have deep biological origins. We have evolved into men by becoming perpetual children, and it is only by being childlike that we can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Such an approach is two-edged. The sceptic can easily seize on Sir Alister's explanations of religious experience as explaining them away. Sir Alister is well aware of the danger, and repeatedly protests that to explain is not to explain away. Yet more than protestation will be required to convince the sceptic. He needs to be shown not only that some people have a commonly recurring feeling of being in touch with what *appears to the person concerned* to be a benign power beyond the self", but that the feeling is actually what it seems to be, and that a fair-minded inquirer should conclude that there is some divinity, perhaps within ourselves but not simply contained by ourselves, which can beneficently shape our ends despite our own inadequacies. In part this must be a matter of argument : we need to state the views of the sceptic with more precision and examine them with great care before we can be clear exactly what we are claiming when we say to him that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in his philosophy. In part, Sir Alister suggests, even the sceptic can put the question to experimental test, by making an attempt, an honestly agnostic prayer—"God, if there is a God, help me to find you, and having found you, help me to have the strength and courage to do what I feel to be your will". But before even this hesitant venture of faith becomes rational, there must be some, at least *prima facie*, evidence of there being a spiritual side to man's experience. And to this the testimonies collected and classified in *The Spiritual Nature of Man* bear impressive witness.

Signs and speakers

By David Holdcroft

BERNARD HARRISON :
An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language
365pp. Macmillan. £12.
0 333 12043 4

As author of an introductory book to the philosophy of language is faced with a formidable task. There is a bewildering variety of different theories, some of which are highly technical, to be surveyed, and, at the same time, the author must try to develop his own position, so that the reader is left with something more than a mere survey.

For the most part Bernard Harrison's book does both of these things admirably. It contains, on the one hand, a survey of the work of such others, Frege, Wittgenstein, Quine, Donald Davidson, Hilary Putnam, John Searle, H. P. Grice, and Jonathan Bennett, and, on the other, a skilful development of Harrison's own position, which has many affinities with that of the late Wittgenstein. Undeniably, some of the survey discussions are less successful than others. It would, for instance, be difficult for a student to get a clear picture of truth theory from Harrison's account. Tarski's notion of satisfaction is discussed without mention of sequences ; and it is nowhere pointed out that Davidson reformulates Tarski's Convention-T, dropping the requirement that T sentences be translational. Indeed, we are told that Davidson shows us how we can non-trivially interpret the concept of meaning in terms of the truth by "explicating the meaning of a sentence in terms of that very same sentence". In a brief section on intentions and modality, which students will surely find extremely cryptic, Harrison claims that by substitution of coextensive terms we can derive "necessarily the number of planets is greater than four" from "Mars is greater than four", and on the opposite page there are two formulae which do not symbolize what they are said to.

However, it would be misleading to dwell on such blemishes, since Harrison's wide-ranging discussion is undoubtedly accomplished and rewarding. Of crucial importance to his argument is the thesis, which he dubs "the autonomy of language", that "the signs of a language derive the interpretations which a speaker places upon them". Frege's twin theses of the objectivity and publicity of sense constitute, Harrison thinks, one possible explanation of the autonomy of language. At the same time they provide an explanation of the possibility of communication, so that Frege belongs unequivocally to neither of the parties engaged in P. F. Strawson's "Homeric struggle" the theorists of communication intention, or the theorists of formal semantics. Harrison thinks that ultimately neither of these parties is successful, and allies himself with neither of them. It is, of course, true that the communication theorist tries to provide an account of linguistic meaning in terms of a prior notion of non-linguistic meaning argued for by Grice. But Harrison claims, the most systematic attempt to do this, that of Bennett, fails, because it can neither give an account of the force and content of a sign, nor one of sentence structure. The communication theorist does indeed give an account of a type of communication which involves interpreting gestures and noises in the light of the beliefs and intentions of their author, but, Harrison maintains, this is not language. Although his arguments do not seem to me to be decisive, it is clear that he has put his finger on a point of major difficulty with accounts of this sort.

By contrast his objections to perhaps the most influential of the theorists of formal semantics, Davidson, are rather a mixed bag. For instance, he argues, following Putnam, that the order of learning linguistic interpretation from sentences to words "runs counter both to intuition and to the actual practice of anthropologists, schoolboys and the decipherers of hieroglyphics of Linear B". He adds that it makes language, language learning. But does it ? Harrison cites no theories in support of his claim, and that of Dore, for instance, would hardly seem to support his view. Nor does it seem obvious that our first grasp of the meanings of words and the force of grammatical constructions "should stand, as it were, to eternity, as things absolutely fixed", rather than be subject to revision in the light of truth conditions attributed to other utterances. Surely in the course of language-learning some revision takes place. Harrison also thinks, for reasons which I am not sure I understand, "we Davidson cannot account for the shared competence of members of a linguistic community. Certainly, Davidson stresses the need to do so, hence the importance which he attaches to the Principle of Charity. But arguably the principle does not do the job it is designed to do, and if this is so, Harrison is right. Anyway, it is clear that at bottom his objection to Davidson's programme is the same as his objection to Bennett's, namely, that it fails to account for the autonomy of language.

In his final chapter Harrison defends a conception of meaning as use which is associated with the work of the later Wittgenstein. He stresses that this theory is not an analysis of meaning in terms of the concept of use ; Wittgenstein is not proposing to analyse meaning in terms of speech acts, as Searle does. On the contrary, Wittgenstein is fundamentally opposed to the idea that our grasp of meaning in natural language is based on our knowledge of the truth of propositions. His view is that ultimately the meaning of a proposition rests on what we do with it, "it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language game" (*On Certainty*, page 204). To learn a language-game is, Harrison argues, to learn a way of manipulating the world into which the use of a sign is integrated, as when one learns to measure. When one learns a language game one learns a public criterion for the application of a sign, and it is because a sign has such a criterion that it has the requisite linguistic autonomy.

In conclusion, two points : the thesis of the autonomy of language would seem to lead Harrison to underestimate the importance of context and background knowledge in the interpretation of utterances—indeed much contemporary work in sociolinguistics seems committed to denying it. It is also worth speculating what would become of the concept of linguistic competence on the sort of view that Harrison defends. It has become usual to think of it in terms of a propositional knowledge of their language possessed by speakers, and more than once Harrison writes as though this were his view. Yet if ultimately the basis of our knowledge of meaning does not rest on the knowledge of propositions this account is radically misconceived.

as an emotional outlet. The use of the word "we" in the particular stanza indicates that Amis wishes to speak to and for men who have, at some time in their life, tried to write poetry: but this is hardly the same as speaking to an academic audience. The best way to account for the tension, perhaps, is to suggest that while the confidence which enables Amis to use the pronoun "we" stems from his sense of belonging to a specific group, the pronoun itself is intended to reach and represent a much wider and more nebulous audience—"we (all of us)" or, at any rate, "we men".

This distinction is a useful one to bear in mind when considering the work of Philip Larkin, the Movement poet who most consistently makes use of the pronoun "we": just over a third of the poems in each of his mature collections—*The Less Deceived*, *The Whitsun Weddings*, *High Windows*—profess to speak for their readers. The pronounced awareness of audience in Larkin's poetry may well have derived from his sense of belonging to a small intellectual group which included friends like Amis and Wain. Like their *Mixed Feelings* and *A Frame of Mind*, his *XX Poems* was privately printed in a limited edition for distribution among friends, and in this sense adheres to the "Augustan" conditions which the Movement admired. But what is remarkable about Larkin's use of the word "we" is its lack of circumscription: its definition of a possible readership is far broader than Amis's or Davie's, achieving what M. L. Rosenthal has called an "implication of universal spokesmanship":

Always too eager for future, we
Pick up bad habits of expectancy.
Something is always approaching;
every day
"Till then" we say . . .
("Next, Please")
What will survive of us is love.
("An Arundel Tomb")

In many poets, the habit of attributing to "us all" particular feelings and beliefs—"We all hate home/And having to be there"—might seem presumptuous. That it never seems so in Larkin is not primarily a matter of his "common touch" or his superior knowledge of "what ordinary people think and feel". Rather, it is a matter of his strategy: he nearly always earns the right to spokesmanship by beginning with a personal experience, and only gradually and tentatively universalizing it. Larkin himself has described this strategy as follows:

> I tend to lead the reader in by the hand very gently, saying this is the initial experience or object, and now you see that it makes me think of this, that and the other, and work up to a big finish—I mean, that's the sort of pattern.

The pattern can be seen in a poem like "Reference Back", which begins by describing a visit which the poet makes to his mother's house; locates the significance of the experience; and then works up to a "big finish" by exploiting the possibilities of the pronoun "we". This could be taken to refer simply to mother and son, but Larkin uses it to suggest that their dilemma is one which overtakes everybody:

Truly, though our element is time,
We are not suited to the long perspectives
Open at each instant of our lives.
They link us to our losses: worse,
They show us what we have as it once was,
Blindingly undiminished, just as thought
By acting differently we could have kept it so.

The movement of the poem is one that Larkin often reproduces: the poet begins by inviting the reader to listen ("Now this is what happened, and what I thought and felt") and finishes by, implicitly, him in what has been said ("We all experience/think/feel this, don't we?"). Unobtrusively but irresistibly, the reader is drawn into the poem, and made to share its concerns. The assurance with which Larkin's longer poems—"Church Going", "Dockery and Son", "The Whitsun Weddings", "The Old Fools"—are brought to a close greatly depends upon this extension of the word "we".

Most of what has been observed so far suggests that the Movement writers saw themselves as writing for a small, academic audience. But with Larkin we are confronted with his assertion that "a possible criticism in the group: the desire to write pleasurable and accessible poetry that might reach a wide audience. Larkin's feelings on the subject of poetic audiences are set out very clearly in "The Pleasure Principle", an extended review written for George Hartley's *Listen* magazine in 1957. He argues there that the principal function of poetry—to give pleasure to others—seems to have been forgotten by contemporary poets, and that "a large-scale revulsion has got to set in against present notions". His review develops into a warning against the dangers of writing for an "academic" audience:

> . . . poetry has lost its old audience, and gained a new one. This has been caused by the consequences of a cunning merger between poet, literary critic and academic critic (three classes now notoriously indistinguishable): it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the poet has gained the happy position wherein he can praise his own poetry in the press and explain it in the classroom. . . .
>
> In short, the modern poetic audience, when it is not taking in its own washing, is a *student* audience, pure and simple. At first sight this may not seem a bad thing. . . . But at bottom poetry, like all art, is inextricably bound up with giving pleasure, and if a poet loses his pleasure-seeking audience he has lost the only audience worth having, for which the dutiful mob that signs on every September is no substitute. . . .
>
> It is not only Larkin, among the Movement poets, who has expressed such views. Four years before the appearance of "The Pleasure Principle", D. J. Enright also warned that poetry was becoming "a special interest—as specialized, as academic, as certain branches of philosophy". His essay "The Poet, the Professor, and the Public" (1953) described contemporary poetry as "a game whose rules are known only to an ever-decreasing circle", and wondered "whether the rightness that can only be enjoyed by a minority (and such a small one, at that) is worth having at all". Similar ideas appeared again in *The Apothecary's Shop* (1957), where Enright dismissed the idea that universities could play any part in "nurturing poetry": "we need not deceive ourselves into believing that real poetry can ever be grown in academic hot-houses with the aid of 'probes and scalpels' or watering-cans or artificial fertilizers".

In the Fifties: Philip Larkin; above right, Kingsley Amis, John Wain; below, Thom Gunn, D. J. Enright.

Reservations about poetry aimed at an academic audience are related to a more general anti-academic impulse running through not only Movement essays and reviews, but Movement poems and novels. Enright's "The Interpreters" for example, is a tract "against interpretation", condemning the minute exegesis encouraged in the university teaching of literature. Like Yeats in "The Scholars", Enright depicts critics as men who, far from being "humanized" by their liberal education, have become desensitized. Criticism is seen as a means of ignoring the "real" human context of texts:

> The poet mentions suffering and
> even starvation:
> dead cats in the street and women
> slowly dying on the streets;
> the lot of a sizable part of a sizable
> nation—
> but dear me no!—that will not do
> for the critic, that connoisseur
> of words
> who cannot abide the crude vulgarity
> of meaning . . .
> for it is not what a poem merely
> says that matters,
> elsewhere than here it finds its true
> signification; where, you may
> be sure,
> refers to some mysterious metaphysical temptation;
> hunger was his image for a broken
> dream; bread
> an old religious symbol; his
> typhoons the wind of God.
> Good lord, if a poet really meant
> what he said,
> we should all be out of a job . . .

Enright's last point is one that has also been made by Robert Conquest, who in a 1966 interview suggested that a conspiracy exists between poets and universities to esteem such qualities as ambiguity and difficulty in verse, since these keep university teachers employed: "The feeling that if you say something in an oblique fashion, it is better than saying it straight, is definitely a highly-established fad, partly tying up with the old academics, because if you say it straight, there is nothing for them to sit and interpret for you—so their jobs are involved." This demeaning of the university profession appears in more comic form in Larkin's poems "Naturally the Foundation Will Bear Your Expenses" and "Posterity". The speaker of the first travels widely and lives well on the basis of a lecture which he repeats at different institutions (Berkeley and Bombay) which he broadcasts on radio, and which he hopes eventually to have published. Jake Balokowsky in "Posterity" is also an academic careerist: he works in a monastic "air-conditioned cell at Kennedy", content to write the biography of a writer whom he regards as an "old fart" because this is the only way to "get tenure".

The academics in Movement novels are scarcely more attractive. In *Lucky Jim* the principal fraud is Professor B. L. S. Caton, who steals an article which Dixon sends to him, though Professor Welch, who makes Dixon do unrewarded research work for him, is almost as culpable. Several Movement heroes are employed as academics—Dixon, Roger Micheldene in *One Fat Englishman*, Packet and Bacon in Enright's *Academic Year*, Roger Durnivall in Wain's *A Winter in the Hills*—but it is an essential part of their unattractiveness that they lack interest in, or fail to be proficient at, their work. Most of them are buffoons or lechers, and the "bungled lecture" is a common motif: Dixon and Bacon deliver drunken lectures to sober audiences, and in *Figures of Speech* Enright self-consciously reverses this—"current fiction was full of drunken lecturers"—by having a sober George Lester address a drunken audience.

It is true that this satirical treatment of the university is no less oriented towards Academe than are the Movement's poems about poetry: those employed in universities could be expected to take a special interest in it. But the Movement's campus novels and campus poems do show a spirit of impatience with academic life, even at times a philistinism, which is significantly different from the solemn view of the university as a "centre of consciousness" passed down to the group by Leavis.

Certain Movement poems, as we have seen, advertise the specialized knowledge of their author; but there is also an opposite tendency in Movement writing to resist specialization and disclaim intellectual achievement. This tendency is particularly noticeable in *Lucky Jim*, where Dixon feels bound to explain that he is a medieval history specialist purely because the medieval papers were a soft option in the Leicester course. This kind of learned reference in *Lucky Jim* is accompanied by a disclaimer which assures the reader that Dixon is not to be regarded as an intellectual. He is reminded "of a sentence in a book of Alfred Beesley's he'd once glanced at"; he "remembered seeing in a book once a statement about love by "somebody like Plato or Rilke"; "he'd read somewhere, or been told, that somebody like Aristotle or I. A. Richards had said that the sight of beauty makes us want to move towards it"; "he remembered somebody once showing him a poem which ended something like 'Accepting dearth, the shadow of death'"; "he remembered a character in a modern novel Beesley had lent him who was always feeling pity moving in him like sickness, or some such phrase". Dixon is surprisingly well-read, but, in order to avoid the taint of academicism, Amis keeps Dixon's memory vague and makes his encounters with literature appear in large measure painful and involuntary.

Dixon's precursor in this matter of the literary disclaimer is Orwell's George Bowling, who is in some respects well-read—he can identify "that feeling you read about in the Bible when it says your bowels yearn"—but whose acquaintance with books is presented as casual and debunking: "I was reading a novel I had got out of Boots, *Wasted Passion* it was called. The chap in the story finds out that his girl has gone off with another chap. He is one of these chaps you read about in novels, that have pale sensitive faces and dark hair and a private income." This extract points towards the kind of influence on the Movement which Orwell had: he encouraged a down-to-earth and plain-speaking intimacy with the Common Reader which was diametrically opposed to Leavis's (perhaps unintentional) encouragement of an erudite and "knowing" intimacy with the fellow Eng Lit specialist. The Movement would not necessarily have thought of Leavis and Orwell as being in opposition—they could be admired equally for their "English" pragmatism and sharpness—but they were nevertheless the two figures in the production of an academic/anti-academic tension in Movement discourse.

Where Leavis exalted literary criticism, Orwell, though a skilful practitioner of it, could not overcome his suspicion that it was essentially "fraudulent", and that "every literary judgment consists in trumping up a set of rules to justify an instinctive preference". And where Leavis supported the idea of a minority culture in which poetry would be read by the responsive few, Orwell sought a remedy a situation in which he saw "the common man becoming more and more anti-poetry, the poet more and more arrogant and unintelligible, until the divorce between poetry and popular culture is accepted as a law of nature". Orwell helped to kindle the Movement's sense of responsibility towards the "large" rather than the "small" audience.

A good example of the Movement's concern to get on close terms with imagined members of the large audience is their use of the word "chap"—a word which Orwell also made much use of. The word functions to induce feelings of solidarity between writer and reader: they are "chaps together", good humoured English types who will tolerate no nonsense. But "good chaps" the writer and reader must be distinguished from "bad chaps": the latter, Amis's 1957 piece in theatres "That Certain Revolution", suggests, are snobs, egoists, poseurs, or (a combination of all these) theatre-duffs: "If chaps who go to the theatre are bad, chaps who practise it, follow it, discuss it, are in it, go to schools of it, are worse. . . . In such people the flame of egotism burns brightly, so that if you find a theatre chap and a non-theatre chap talking together, the chances are immense that they are talking about the theatre, or rather one of them is".

The intimacy invited in such passages is not that of the intellectual "we" of some Movement poem, which flatters the reader's sense of superior knowledge ("we are familiar with this allusion, are we not?"), but that of the homogeneous "you and I", which appeals to the reader's sense of social decorum ("You and I would not behave like that, would we?"). Indeed Movement writers sometimes use the phrase "you and I" to unite the reader side with them against academics and intellectuals. When Donald Davie criticized Wain's novel *Hurufu* for an attack on Ezra Pound on his return that critics were becoming "something only fit for the Expert, and no longer for you and me", the suggestion is that "you and I" are inevitably non-intellectuals. In a very similar fashion, Amis reviewed Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* in 1956, invites his Spectator readers not to feel ashamed that they fail to be familiar with the intellectuals whom Wilson discusses:

> Here they come—tramp, tramp, tramp—all those characters you thought were discredited, or else never read, or (if you are like me) had never heard of: Camus, Sartre, Camus, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Hermann Hesse, Malcolm Lowry, Van Gogh, Nijinsky, Strindberg, Dostoyevsky, George Fox, Blake, Sri Ramakrishna, Gurdjieff, T. E. Hulme and a large number of lit players in the Legion of the Lost; they are the Legion of the Lost are all the old song has it. Marvellous to hold with the drum playing, pick up the step there!

Amis's strategy in the passage clearly involves a good deal of pretence. It is unlikely that, as a university teacher, he had "never read" or "never heard of" the famous figures, and it is equally probable that his educated readers had never heard of them. The "philistine" consciousness is conducted by an intellectual addressed as much to fellow intellectuals as to Common Readers: must not, therefore, be taken at face value. As the comic image indicates—writers and artists marching in a legion—Amis is partly to be playful and parodic.

deglamourize great writers by reducing them to the level of awkward human beings.

The Movement writers' chatty familiarity was also intended as an implicit rebuke to the Modernist writers against whom they were reacting. They detected in certain statements by Ezra Pound, for example, ("I quarrel with that infamous remark of Whitman's about poets needing an Audience") an arrogant disregard of the public. For Pound, the popularity of the Georgian poetry anthologies, and failure to appreciate *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*, testified to the corruption of public taste: he believed, quite understandably, that it was not beneficial for a poet to direct his work at such a public. But some of the Movement poets had an attitude to Modernism which made them side with the public rather than with Pound, and even Donald Davie, the Movement writer most sympathetic to Pound, accused him of "scrapping the contracts traditionally observed between poet and reader" by failing to provide "metrical landmarks to assist us".

The Movement believed indifference or hostility to the reader to be responsible for what they saw as the obscurity of Modernist poetry. Awareness of the reader, they thought, helped the poet to "remain his oddities", and was a prerequisite for a relationship of equality and trust: as Enright puts it, "the poet should do the work, his fair share of it, and not leave it to the researching reader to seek clues on other ground". The Modernists destroyed this relationship by failing to concern themselves with the reader's likely reception of the poem, and his possible difficulties with its meaning. Now it was time to invert MacLeish, and to make poetry once again "a mean" rather than "be". T. S. Eliot had pleaded with readers to be patient if they found a poet's work obscure ("remember that what he may have been trying to do was put something into words which could not be said in another way"), but the Movement defended the rights of the reader to be bored by difficult poetry, declaring that patience with Modernist experimentation had worn thin. Larkin, for example, argued that the "definite characteristic" of Modernism was "an obscurity unlike previous types in being deliberate and unnecessary", and looked back to the days when "sales of 'Georgian Poetry' went regularly into five figures".

The last remark is particularly interesting, for it points towards the Movement's nostalgia not for the Augustan small audience, but for the Georgian large one. Several of the Movement admire John Betjeman because he is one of the few poets since the Georgians to reach a large audience. Larkin's reviews of Betjeman's work nearly always contain a reference to his sales figures, and attribute much of his popularity to his "rejection of modernism": "For him there has been no symbolism, no objective correlative, no T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound".

The critic of the Movement is found, then, with a series of divisions. The Movement enjoys and exploits the sense of belonging to an academic élite; but also disapproves of writing aimed at such an élite, asserts the importance of university teachers and critics; but also questions and satirizes their function. It decreases that to write for a large audience is damaging; but also desirable, and necessary. Its work is elusive, intimate with fellow intellectuals; but also simple, "accessible"; intimate with an imagined Common Reader.

One way to make sense of the Movement's divided attitude to audience is to look again at the group's political identity. The Movement writers formed an élite: they moved in the company of other intellectuals, and they wrote the kind of poetry that would be employed in intellectual circles. But they were also identified as the "new men" of a welfare state in Britain in which elitism and privilege were coming to be regarded as ugly notions. In a period of democratic ideals, there were pressures, from both within and without the group, to be politically useful, to write not for privileged minorities, but for the citizen, public. The newly instituted Arts Council, itself an example of the desire to "bring the arts to the people", sometimes put attention in its annual reports on the onus on writers to reach a growing audience for literature; and even the critical writings of Davie and D. W. Harding, however "élitist" their assumptions could be felt to have a relevance to the current climate of political thought, because of their stress upon the responsibilities of intellectual minorities towards the public. Bateson encouraged the Movement to think of themselves as cultural ambassadors, "missionaries of poetry in a world of prose". Leavis depicted universities as "collaborative communities", "centres of consciousness" which beget and protect literary sensitivity: eventually, through their efforts, an "adequate" reading public could be created. The notion of the responsible minority promised a reconciliation of the small audience and the large: as a member of the former, one was in an ideal position to instruct the latter.

The Movement's emphasis upon the writer's responsibility towards his public may partly be seen, therefore, as a reflection of contemporary ideology. When Larkin talks of leading the reader by the hand, when Davie admonishes Pound for breaking contracts and denying the reader assistance, and when Enright asks the poet to do his fair share of work, a socio-political code is transformed into a code for writer-reader relations: the poet or critic, privileged because of a superior knowledge of the text, must make special efforts to help the "underprivileged" reader—the critic by sensitive teaching, and the poet by putting a new emphasis on clarity and comprehensibility in poetry.

A notable attempt to induce the intellectual élite to act responsibly towards the public can be found in John Wain's anthology of critical essays, *Interpretations*. Though theirs is a serious intellectual enterprise, much influenced by the close reading encouraged by Leavis, Empson and I. A. Richards, the contributors to this anthology eschew specialist language, preferring to make explanations through analogies of an everyday kind. Wain describes the first four stanzas of Yeats's "Among School Children" as having "a good head of steam to drive us along", and he depicts poetry in general in terms of a human face—"the way the words are put together", "the personal run of the rhythm", "are 'what we learn to go by just as we learn to size up human beings on first acquaintance".

Bernard Bergonzi, who has written excellently about the collection, notes the prevalence in *Interpretations* of mechanical imagery—as well as Wain's "head of steam", there are bridges, bulldozers, piers, concrete, tools and engines: the overall effect of such imagery is to suggest that the critic is not an ethereal "high-brow" but a useful worker whose job is not unlike that of the civil engineer. At the end of his introduction Wain asks that literary criticism "come down from the summit and allow itself to be seen as an affair of simple responsiveness and common sense", since it is important "to get people to be less frightened of literary criticism". The critics in *Interpretations* accord with this aim by offering good-natured assistance; ingenious emendations and erudite allusions are less valued than a friendly tone and readily comprehensible prose style. Many of the distinctive features of *Interpretations* are visible again in Wain's own critical collection *Preliminary Essays* (1957). At one point, mixing his metaphors freely, Wain says that "we want a little less gas about [Dylan] Thomas and some criticism that really talks turkey".

Movement criticism is clearly instruction from above, and Wain in particular often seems to be talking *down* to rather than *with* the reader: his common mannerism, as was remarked on at the time, can make him seem very patronizing. Similar uncertainties of tone can be found in the poetry of Donald Davie, though the effect is an opposite one, making Davie overestimate the reader where Wain had underestimated him. Choosing "Corrib. An Emblem" as his contribution to an anthology of poetry in 1962, Davie explains that although the poem was based on a painting by Tiepolo, he had not made this explicit in the poem, since to have done so would have been the mark of "an intellectual snob, culture-vulture, and aesthete". Yet how are we to reconcile Davie's appeal to the Common Reader with a poem that introduces, within its fifteen lines, the words and phrases "tutelary", "subcutaneous", "pre-divinity", "art Palladian", "Hispanic through the Galway Lynches", "virtu in freight" and "Syrinx".

Davie is instinctively a learned and allusive poet, and there are poems of his which draw strength from this. But he also feels the need, as Pound and Eliot did not, to apologize for being learned and allusive: the gesture towards the "Common Reader", the gruff no-nonsense attacks which the Movement make on aestheticism, "obscurity" and minority art, exist sometimes as if to atone for being part of a charmed academic circle. As Lindsay Anderson said of Amis, the Movement poet "will rather pose as a Philistine than run the risk of being despised as an intellectual".

There are cases, then, of the Movement falling between two stools: in trying to balance the interests of the large audience and the small, it sometimes failed to reach either. It would, though, be misleading to conclude that this was always so. In those poems where the intimacy learnt as a result of addressing a small, known group is brought into play when addressing a large, unknown one, amalgamation could be said to be achieved.

One such poem is Larkin's "Dockery and Son". Since it opens with the visit of the speaker to the university at which he was an undergraduate some twenty years earlier, the poem might be felt to have a special interest for the small audience. The black gowns, the "canal and clouds and colleges", the dean, the language of the dean ("Dockery was junior to you/Wasn't he?") and of the speaker (he talks of people being "up" at college): these identify the setting as an Oxford or Cambridge one. But while Oxford provides the initial setting, the speaker's meditation on the divergence between his life and that of a near-contemporary gives the poem a much wider circumference. Deterring at first, both in his "death-suited" stiffness with the dean and in his cosy memories of undergraduate naughtiness—

> Black-gowned, unbreakfasted, and
> still half-tight
> We used to stand before that desk,
> to give
> "Our version" of "these incidents
> last night".

—he gains sympathy only once he has left Oxford, "ignored", and travels towards the workaday world of Sheffield. It is then that he begins to ponder, vaguely and without much success, who Dockery might have been:

> Was he that withdrawn
> High-collared public-schoolboy, sharing rooms
> With Cartwright who was killed?
> Well, it just shows
> How much . . . How little . . . Yawning, I suppose
> I fell asleep, waking at the fumes
> And furnace-glares of Sheffield,
> where I changed,
> And ate an awful pie, and walked
> along
> The platform to its end to see the
> ranged
> Joining and parting lines reflect a
> strong
> Unhindered moon.

That "awful pie" is crucial here in establishing the poet as a man who notices such things—a man whose sure grasp of the commonplace encourages us to trust his insights into deeper and more serious questions about fate, free will, heredity, time, the purpose of life (according to the Movement's aesthetic, the less special or gifted a person the more he is to be relied on). The speaker's "ordinariness" becomes more apparent in the next lines, when he puzzles why he and Dockery should have come to lead such different lives. Freedom is what the speaker wanted and he believed he could find it by remaining unmarried and childless. But Dockery seems to have acted on quite different assumptions:

> Dockery now:
> Only nineteen, he must have taken
> stock
> Of what he wanted, and been
> capable
> Of. . . .No, that's not the difference:
> rather, how
> Convinced he was he should be
> added to
> Why did he think adding meant
> increase?
> To me it was dilution. Where do
> these
> Innate assumptions come from? Not
> from what
> We think truest, or most want to
> do . . .

The speaker's puzzling process is dramatized by the inclusion of hesitations and qualifications such as "now", "No, that's not . . .", and "rather", which give the impression of a man earnestly struggling to make sense of a difficult problem. The problem, it is implied, is one faced by everybody: the introduction of the word "we" in the lines above concludes the contrast between the speaker and Dockery, and begins the definition of what they, and everyone, have in common—an inability to prevent habit taking over our lives. In the last four lines of the poem, the pronoun "we" recurs to reinforce the increasing fatalism—"we" are all at the mercy of irresistible forces—and creates a memorable universalizing of the poet's feelings:

> Life is first boredom, then fear.
> Whether or not we use it, it goes
> And leaves what something hidden
> from us chose,
> And age, and then the only end of
> age.

Such is the power of these and other concluding lines in Larkin's work, that it is easy to forget how closed they make the poem: beyond the response "Yes" or "How true" there is, as a Larkin poem of that title puts it, "nothing to be said". This is because Larkin's poetry minimizes the interpretative process by including it within the text: what is inferred by the reader is limited by what has already been inferred by the speaker, whose own struggle to "discover meaning" is what the poem dramatizes. The reader is "helped" (he cannot be confused as to what the poem means), but he is also restricted (the only meaning he takes away from the poem is the one found for him by the speaker). In its treatment of the reader, Movement poetry offers a sharp contrast with Modernism. Pound and Eliot may sometimes give the reader few bearings, but they do at least allow him space to explore. Movement poetry, seeing Modernism not as "open" but as "obscure", is more conscious of the reader, but *in providing him with an interpretant and guide*, it also inhibits his movements.

Too Bloody Nice

He was too bloody nice, oh too bloody nice,
Couldn't say no, and he paid the price,
Went out with Marie, who's as cold as ice.

She cooked his dinner, she tidied his flat,
And then she moved in, and that was that.
He paid the price, he was too bloody nice.

She booked a hotel, he didn't say no,
He got her a child, we told him so,
Ignored our advice, he was too bloody nice.

Gun-shot wedding, honeymoon in Greece,
Marie was as shrewd as a chief of police,
He was too bloody nice, what a sacrifice,

He was too bloody nice, just too bloody nice.

Simon Curtis

Early imprints of Iberia

By Paul Needham

F. J. NORTON :
A Descriptive Catalogue of Printing in Spain and Portugal 1501-1520
584pp. Cambridge University Press. £85.
0 521 21136 0

As collaborative projects creep inexorably over the world of learning, there is a special satisfaction in contemplating those increasingly rare monumental tasks of scholarship that have been conceived, carried through and completed by a single mind, without benefit (or handicap) of committee. This is precisely the accomplishment of F. J. Norton in his *Descriptive Catalogue of Printing in Spain and Portugal 1501-1520*. Though he does not claim his work "to be more than a first attempt of its kind", surely its value will be permanent and far-reaching. Iberia now joins the Netherlands, Poland, Scandinavia and the British Isles among the regions of Europe whose early printing, even past the artificial terminus of midnight, December 31, 1500, is recorded with reasonable accuracy.

Mr Norton's accuracy, it should be said, goes a good deal beyond what is usually comprehended by "reasonable". He began work on this project in 1955; the first fruits of his labours were published by Cambridge University Press in 1966 as *Printing in Spain 1501-1520*, an expansion of the 1963 Sandars Lectures. The bulk of that volume was devoted to a survey of the presses active in Spain, with added essays on relations with the crown, on the early editions of the *Celestina* of Fernando de Rojas, and with a particularly useful subject analysis of Spanish printing in the period. The *Descriptive Catalogue* documents this in detail. It lists 1,372 items printed in Spain from 1501 to 1520 ; the exiguous printing tradition of Portugal (only forty-four items in these decades) is treated separately, with a separate introduction organized along the lines of *Printing in Spain 1501-1520*.

Editions are arranged under towns (in alphabetical order) and then under printers, according to their dates of activity in that town. A compressed paragraph gives bibliographical and other relevant data for each printer, followed by a list of his types and devices, with facsimiles of the M-forms for the gothic types (which predominate). Descriptions include format, collation, lineation and type area. The transcriptions are carefully chosen to reveal the textual organization of the books, including prefatory material, headings, secondary texts, and the like. Bibliographical references are very full, and a census of surviving copies is given for each edition, with signs to indicate copies that have been personally examined, and examined in photocopy. The censuses are of great value, for they demonstrate what has long been sensed by students of early printing : how hard it has been for books to survive. More than half the editions which were located by Norton survive in a unique copy, and seventy-eight per cent survive in three copies or fewer. Even these statistics do not fully reveal the probable losses : Norton includes an additional 242 editions of which no copies could be located, though they are reliably recorded in miscellaneous sources. Of those, 113 (very) "hypothetical" only in the manuscript registers of the Biblioteca Colombina : that is, they were acquired by Fernando Colón before his death in 15.39, but have since been lost. It seems almost certain that many early editions have disappeared without record.

More than forty per cent of the located editions lack statements of place, printer, date, or some combination of these ; the assignment and dating of these books are based primarily on their types and other typographic materials, with assistance from indications in the texts themselves, and much other scattered evidence. The early sixteenth century is well into the period when the same set of punches or matrices might commonly provide types for more than one printer, but as Mr Norton informs us, contamination by variant sorts and other modifications still generally serve to distinguish one printer's fount from another's, and even when this is not the case, subsidiary evidence has been sufficient to resolve ambiguities.

The dating of undated books is obviously more problematic. Norton's supplied dates are generally concisely explained when they do not proceed directly from his chronology of the types used. Books close in date to 1500 are included "only when the balance of the evidence appeared to be at least slightly in favour of printing after 1500 . . . all other accessible books noted in catalogues of incunabula as of c1500 have been considered for inclusion here and rejected". It might have been useful to index the ex-incunabula which Norton has pulled into the sixteenth century, for they number in the dozens, and some have been redated to as late as c1518. One such book, no 129, was placed in the fifteenth century by Haebler, Vindel, and the Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke. But it is dedicated to Martin García as bishop of Barcelona, and Norton notes laconically that García did not become bishop until August 1511 ; its date is changed to [c1512-15?].

As this example may suggest, the bibliography of fifteenth-century Iberian printing, though complete in comparison with Germany, Italy and France, is less unified than that supplied by Norton for the next two decades. Three works taken together supply most of the necessary information: the bibliographies of Konrad Haebler and Francisco Vindel (the latter for Spain only) and, an indispensable supplement, "BMC X" : volume ten of the catalogue of incunabula in the British Library. G. D. Painter's General Introduction to BMC X computes the total of Spanish incunabula at 856 editions, excluding Hebrew texts ; there were only eighteen non-Hebrew Portuguese incunabula. He lists thirty-three additions to, and 226 omissions from, Haebler and Vindel, with reasons for the omissions, many of which are the result of Norton's researches. Painter's total provides a good basis for comparison with the period from 1501-1520. Though printing may have begun in Spain as early as 1472 and had almost certainly begun by 1474, the number of surviving editions from the 1470s can hardly amount to more than three dozen. The last two decades of the fifteenth century therefore produced about 820 editions, compared to about 1,370 in the first two decades of the sixteenth century : an increase in output of two-thirds. The increase did not come smoothly. In *Printing in Spain*, Norton estimated the output of the 1490s at about 600 editions, that of the first decade of the sixteenth century at only about 500 editions, that of the second decade at about 800 editions.

As is well known, Spain was throughout this period and for another forty years a nation without a capital, a collection of kingdoms and principalities united only at the level of the crown and administered by a wandering court. This lack of centrality may be partially reflected in the early Spanish printed book trade. At least twenty-seven Spanish towns were homes of printing-presses in the fifteenth century, if Pamplona (in the independent kingdom of Navarre), Perpignan and Mallorca be counted. This by itself is not a strikingly large figure, and most of the presses were short-lived. Those in twelve towns were extinct before 1501, and in seven other towns had discontinuous existences before 1520. It is noteworthy, however, that no single town established a dominant position in the book trade in its first decades. Seventy-five or more incunable editions were printed in three Castilian cities (Seville, Salamanca and Burgos) and three Aragonese (Barcelona, Saragossa, Valencia), accounting altogether for about seventy-five per cent of Spanish incunabula. In the early sixteenth century these six cities continued to be active, each producing more than 100 editions from 1501-20. Seville, with 300 editions, was now well above its nearest rival Barcelona (153 editions), but this preeminence was temporary. The bulk of Seville's printing business was in the hands of one man, Jacobo Cromberger, who continued the 1490s establishment of Ungut and Polonus. Toledo, home of only about three dozen incunabula, produced 139 editions from 1501-20.

Only two new towns had an active printing trade in the early sixteenth century, Logroño and Alcalá. They owed their activity to the entrepreneurship of the same man, Arnao Guillén de Brocar, the most interesting Spanish printer of his time, who had begun work in Pamplona in 1490. When Brocar removed his business from Logroño that town's printing history sank back into obscurity, but Alcalá, with its newly-founded, prestigious university, continued to be an important printing centre at least to the end of the century. Brocar's polyglot Bible, produced at Alcalá under the patronage of Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros, had, as might be expected, by far the best survival rate of Iberian books from this period. Norton's census, which he warns us to be incomplete, extends to 147 copies.

The overall character of the Spanish printing trade through the remainder of the sixteenth century is still matter for investigation, but it is clear that following its selection by Philip II as the capital city in 1561, Madrid rose rapidly to a major position as a centre of printing and publishing, at the expense of Toledo more than of Alcalá. Seville and Salamanca continued to be important printing towns, but it appears that Burgos and the chief Aragonese centres, Barcelona, Valencia and Saragossa, declined at least in relative importance. One component of the Aragonese decline may have been the shrinking market for Catalan printing, the beginnings of which are seen in Norton's catalogue. Painter put the total of Catalan-language printing in the fifteenth century at 117 editions. A rapid survey of Norton's catalogue suggests an almost identical number from 1501-20—approximately 120 editions—despite the considerably greater total output of printing at this time. It must furthermore be significant that nearly as many Spanish-language as Catalan editions were published in Valencia from 1501-20, and a handful also in Barcelona : in neither town was there Spanish vernacular printing in the fifteenth century.

Norton's catalogue is a mine yielding ores of many kinds. He has done a great deal of the digging himself, with an alphabetical title index, an index of names other than authors, and a detailed subject index, ranging from the general (Latin language : Saints ; Theology) to the particular (Carving ; Jousting ; Ready reckoning). For financial reasons, it was necessary to print from typewriter composition, with unjustified right margins and an inevitable loss in attractiveness. But the many special characters necessary for transcriptions of early printing were adequately supplied (this must not have been easy), and the result is clean and legible. One final comment and a addendum might be made. No 55 in Norton's catalogue is a copy of *Aeneid* in the British Library, signed by Gabriel Pou of Barcelona and dated in Latin, June 23, 1495. It is generally agreed that this must be a miswording either for 1485 or 1505; Pou is named as a printer in a document of 1497, but his first clearly dated book belongs to 1501. Haebler and BMC X both assign this *Aeneid* to the sixteenth century. In *Printing in Spain* Norton expressed a suspicion that the inscribed date was 1495, but in the present *Descriptive Catalogue* his position appears to be purely agnostic. But perhaps, a careful study of the watermarks might provide a firm answer, or at least tilt the balance of evidence one way or the other.

No 1204 in the *Catalogue* is an unlocated Catalan *Tractat de los regiments* printed in Valencia by Joan Joffre, July 31, 1516. Sotheby's work seem to press. A unique surviving copy appeared at Sotheby's in the second Brotherton sale, May 8-9, 1978, lot 626. It now belongs in a private American collection, and by coincidence is on my desk as I write this. It may be recorded, therefore, that it is a quarto in ten (not twelve) leaves of a single gathering, signed a, c, e, g, h, of thirty-two lines, has a type-page measure of 162 x 101 mm ; that it uses four of Joffre's types, 167 G (title), 138 G *bis* (text of headings and colophon), 101 G (text) and 66 G (marginalia). There are 95 x 92 mm woodcut on the verso of the title, representing a clerk writing at a desk. The text is an abridgement of the short version of the *Regimen sanitatis Salernitanum*, its Latin verses intermixed with prose Catalan paraphrase. The last five pages are taken up with a miscellany of adages and proverbs, advice, drawn from Seneca, Marcus Jeronic, and other wise men.

The launching of GK4

By Julian Roberts

The British Library General Catalogue of Printed Books to 1975 : Volume 1
509pp. Bingley. £38.
0 85157 521 8.

The new *British Library General Catalogue* has a slightly un-British exterior. One is assailed by a sudden doubt which is happily resolved by a glance at the verso of the title. Yes, we are still printing and binding our own library catalogues, even if the enterprise and the money behind this one are largely German.

This must surely be the final cumulation in the majestic series which began with "GK1" almost 100 years ago. Its revised successor ("GK2") was begun fifty years ago and abandoned after half that time. The photolithographic edition ("GK3"), which took that place stemmed from one of the most courageous and forward-looking decisions ever taken in British librarianship. It was followed by three supplements produced by the same technique. All are now cumulated in the present publication which has also, its promoters tell us, an additional 100,000 unpublished catalogue entries and hundreds of thousands of corrections and amendments taken over from the Museum/Library's own working files.

What then are the advantages of the new catalogue (which will presumably be referred to familiarly as "GK4") ? There can be no serious doubt that the British Library inherited from the Museum the finest all-round collection of books in the humanities in the world. This much appeared from GK3. It remains for the supplements to reveal the great postwar efforts to maintain the library's eminence as a collection of the world's literature and to regain its supremacy as a collection of English literature, a position challenged by vigorous American competitors. It will be splendid to have all this in one sequence, a sequence of smaller volumes, which are still printed on a good opaque paper.

The publishers have, I take it, two principal objectives (other than making money) in selling a 360-volume set to the libraries of the world. The first is the simple one of shaping users elsewhere to discover whether the British Library has a book available for photocopying or for eventual consultation. For this reprint will be useless as a working copy in the British Library itself, to be used as GK3 is now used, mounted as guard-volumes and used for the purpose of calling up books. The reduction ratio is tolerable for most purposes, but it has played havoc with the manuscript alterations to the catalogue, most of which probably involve shelf-marks. What the reader in Tokyo or Los Angeles really needs to know is whether the library has a particular book or periodical issue. The rest of this will be when the reprint gets to the Periodical Publications heading and we can see how many defunct serials have been closed.

It was always regarded as a serious fault of GK3 that a user at a distance might find himself going to the Museum for a book only to discover that it had been destroyed in the war ; the shelf-marks had been left unchanged, in the hope that replacements might be found. An attempt has been made for the present catalogue to indicate this by prefixing the letter D to the shelf-mark. This has been done (like a good many of the manuscript alterations) with truly appalling untidiness and no one has bothered to explain what this very important sign means. "D" has also been prefixed to the shelf-marks of some books which cannot have been destroyed.

The preface gives a minimal introduction to the British Museum cataloguing rules (which govern all but the very latest entries to be made in this reprint). Even a page more of explanation would have enabled users to benefit far more from the catalogue. As it is, the rules of alphabetization (the "Rose Mac" to "Haddock") have been reprinted to the virtual exclusion of any explanation as to how the complex cataloguing rules actually work. The standard of grammar, syntax and proof-reading in the preface hardly inspires confidence in what follows.

A great many users—perhaps the majority—will value the catalogue as a bibliography principally of writings in English, but also of works in other languages which the Museum was, in its greatest days, so successful in collecting. The reprint will be able to incorporate the carefully revised and structured entries for some authors (mainly the important figures in English literature) which appear in the reading-room copies of the catalogue but not in the published supplements. A less perfunctory preface would have warned the user that the vast majority of unrevised entries in the catalogue are very short, indeed on bibliographical detail and may not have been touched since the 1880s.

The early letters of the alphabet, for which the relatively clean copy of GK2 can be used, are satisfactorily printed and compare favourably with other photographic reprints from a homogeneous copy. The unlucky victims of reducing and haddocking will surely appear later on, and the judgment on the reprint can only be made after, for example, the periodical publications letter has been issued. One would have expected a team of no fewer than seven layout artists to have achieved a more even base in printing ; as it is, some of the more recent catalogue entries come out very black and smudgy.

So concludes a century of cataloguing in the imperial style. Soon the British Museum cataloguing rules will be frozen and the elaborate typography, distinctions—bold for the main, roman with generous capitals for the title, italic for the imprint, even the occasional splendour of black letter—will give way to a staring dots on a television screen. But the concept that these records symbolize, all human knowledge under one enormous roof, will endure ? Already another development is beginning to limit it. A few academics who tell it like it probably wants to hear, that knowledge can be saved by boosting the nation's books, all over the place, that we lack the vision and the resources to recreate our national library, the Trustees of the British Museum (for whom the Library's *General Catalogue* is a sacred text) should ponder these volumes and consider whether the vision to be remembered by the world as nothing better than the successor to Patrick Gordon-Walker's

The dodge-question of dialect

By Dennis Welland

JEAN CHOTHIA :
Forging a Language
A Study of the Plays of Eugene O'Neill
243pp. Cambridge University Press £10.50.
0 521 22569 8

It has long been held that American literature is differentiated by the strength of its vernacular tradition, yet this argument has seldom been sympathetically applied to American drama : even admirers of it speak apologetically of the unadventurousness and flatness of its dialogue. This is not altogether surprising. Dramatic criticism as an academic discipline originated in the close textual study of Elizabethan and Jacobean verse plays and has, until recently, tended to expect the drama of later periods to be susceptible to a similarly literary approach. In understandable reaction against this, university departments of drama have focused attention on the play in performance, while in the theatre, changes in theory and in practice have reduced the primacy of the spoken word and minimized differences between language on the stage and the language of everyday life.

Meanwhile, Jean Chothia herself points out that independent developments in linguistics have reached the point where two eminent scholars (David Crystal and Derek Davy) can with justice complain that "few books written by literary critics which purport to discuss an author's language have achieved anything like the degree of precision required to make their observations meaningful to the linguist".

Into this minefield Jean Chothia steps boldly, choosing as her subject the major American dramatist about the inadequacies of whose use of language there has hitherto been the highest degree of consensus on both sides of the Atlantic. Her introduction and her opening chapter seek to establish Eugene O'Neill in the historical context of the American theatre, but in so doing she also provides a stimulating essay on the nature and place of language in the total experience of a dramatic performance. She has some salutarily down-to-earth comments to make on the gap that must necessarily and desirably exist between the language of drama and that of everyday usage, however much some playwrights may seek to blur the distinction. We have already come a long way since Johnson could suppose that an audience's expectations were restricted to the desire "to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation", and this book usefully advances the general discussion still further.

Rejecting what she calls "the 'realistic fallacy' that dramatic dialogue should and could be transparent" in directly transferring to the stage our ordinary living speech, Jean Chothia denies herself the easy defence that O'Neill's dialogue is as true to life as a tape-recorder. In the theatre, she suggests, "The illusion of authenticity is more important than authenticity itself", and O'Neill was unusually resourceful in exploring a variety of ways of creating that illusion. She argues that it is on a lifelong and often agonized experimentation with language that his dramatic achievement ultimately rests—that, properly understood, his use of language, far from requiring apology, is the source of his strength.

Dividing his work conventionally into three periods, early, middle, and late, she makes no attempt to minimize the unevenness of his performance in each of those periods, nor does she see the periods as of equal merit or exhibiting continuous progress. Recognizing that O'Neill's drama is rarely mediocre ("it is good or it fails badly because the conception has a size and vigour quite different from that of any of his contemporaries"), she values the promise latent in the middle-period plays more than the plays themselves which "can easily seem more significant when they are described than when we read them or see them in performance". An anxiety to avoid this kind of aggrandizement leads her to be too severe, I think, in her strictures on *Mourning Becomes Electra*, which to me show a more moving in performance than she suggests, perceptive and illuminating though her exogesis of its final scene is.

If her preference for the early and the late plays is likely to command general agreement, it is a preference that rests on new and cogently argued reasons. What she finds so striking in the early plays "is not that he uses a particular idiom but that he is conscious of the mixture in the American vernacular and is able to project through its means the instability and variety of America". She demonstrates how in *All God's Chillun* levels of articulacy differ not only between the characters but within different characters at different stages of their development, so as to establish "a social context in which there is both stasis and change". In *The Hairy Ape* it is the juxtaposing of various idioms that dramatizes the shifting relationships between the characters, as well as their varying degrees of fluency, the range and nature of their vocabularies, and the linguistic patterning of their speeches. In *Desire under the Elms* the rural vernacular is shown to be less characteristically that of New England than is generally supposed, and the Old Testament language with which it is intermingled is shown to be often distorted, but this extending of the vernacular, while retaining an effective impression of realistic speech, allows O'Neill to introduce some of the allusive quality and the rhythmic variations of poetry.

By 1929 O'Neill himself was complaining, "I'm so straight-jacketed by writing in terms of talk ! I'm so fed up with the dodge-question of dialect !" In search of "a language to write drama in", he abandoned low-colloquial dialects in favour of the General American that was to prove even more restrictive in the plays of the middle years. By 1932 he realized that *Mourning Becomes Electra* "needed a great language to lift it beyond itself. I haven't got that. . . . The best one can do is to be pathetically eloquent by one's moving dramatic inarticulations". In its self-deprecation it is a clear anticipation of Edmund's famous line in *Long Day's Journey into Night*, "Stammering is the native eloquence of us fog people". It is the eloquence in that play and in its precursor, *The Iceman Cometh*, that Jean Chothia rightly sees as the triumph of O'Neill's experimentation, and not the least useful feature of her analysis of the language of those two plays is her demonstration of their essential complementariness. Her method, in the extended discussion of *The Iceman Cometh*, brings out the inventiveness of O'Neill's use of a slang that is authentically of its period but, more importantly, *seems* authentic because of its vitality and its capacity to be absorbed into the communal vocabulary of the play. It creates a feeling of degradation and hopelessness without needing recourse to the obscene language of everyday life that more recent dramatists seem unable or unwilling to avoid, and its effectiveness in differentiating the characters, as well as the rhythms of the dramatic movement, is convincingly related to O'Neill's sketches of the stage plans for the production. (It is a pity that the reproduction of these, and, even more, of some pages of O'Neill manuscripts, is on a scale that requires a magnifying glass to do them justice.)

Jean Chothia's most impressive chapter is the one on *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Here a keen ear for language as something being spoken by actors, not merely words on a printed page, enables her to give a beautifully lucid exposition of O'Neill's subtle manipulation of the audience's response to each of the characters, shifting from empathy to alienation and constantly changing. Her analysis of Edmund's long confessional speech in Act Four is particularly illuminating, and so also her discussions of the use of quotation and the use of euphemisms as contributions to the moods, movement, and music of that overwhelming play. Her concentration on this as the culminating achievement of O'Neill's long career necessitates the relegation to a brief appendix of consideration of the problems of the "Cycle" plays to which he devoted so much energy at the end of his life, but she insists that this is only "a working inquiry into" O'Neill's drama and not "the definitive account".

Definitive or not, the book will be invaluable to any student of O'Neill as an original and discriminating commentary on his major plays, as well as for its sensitivity to his use of language, and its readiness to draw informed comparisons between that and the language of other writers from Jane Austen through Dickens and Mark Twain to Ring Lardner. O'Neill's dramas are discussed in relation to those of Synge, Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Pinter, Brecht and Beckett. There are useful commentaries, too, on his reading and the literary influences identifiable in his work ; these are tabulated, play by play, in an appendix. *Forging a language* has much to offer the literary scholar and the drama student alike, and it would now be interesting to know from the linguists whether its discussion of O'Neill's language, thorough and meticulous as it is, achieves "the degree of precision" desiderated by the authorities quoted earlier.

Oriental Brecht

By John Willett

ANTONY TATLOW :
The Mask of Evil
630pp. Berne and Las Vegas ; Peter Lang. Sw frs 80.

Thanks to a concatenation of factors, including its high price and unconventional publisher, the most important critical work on Brecht to appear in the past two years has virtually escaped notice. Antony Tatlow's *The Mask of Evil* is a study of the relations between the work of the German writer and the poetry, drama and philosophy of China and Japan. There have been a number of partial investigations of this intriguing area—an area inhabited by such varied creatures as Po Chü-i and Mao Tse-tung, Arthur Waley and Paul Claudel, Gerhard Eisler and Sergei Tretiakov—notably Mr Tatlow's own monograph on *Brechts chinesische Gedichte*, which argued that Brecht, using Waley's translations as a basis, got closer to the originals than Waley himself. But there has never been a comprehensive study, and Mr Tatlow, situated as he is in Hong Kong, is well placed to make it.

Some of the academic luggage is a bit unnecessary (though the book is not, in fact, derived from a thesis) ; but a number of fascinating new points emerge ; for instance the convincingly established link between Brecht's concept of "dialectics" and the often paradoxical and ironic thinking of Socrates' Chinese contemporary Mo Tse. When Brecht wrote of the "great method" he usually seems to mean Marxism, but the term itself evidently originated with Mo. This pioneering book might well have repercussions in China now that Huang Zuolin's Peking production of *Galileo* has revived interest in Brecht there.